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CHOLERIC MAN.

A COMEDY,

AS IT IS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL

IN

DRURY-LANE.

*Jam istaec insipientia est,
Sic itam in promptu gerere.*

PLAUTUS.

By RICHARD CUMBERLAND, Esq.

L O N D O N :

Printed for T. BECKET, the Corner of the Adelphi
in the Strand, 1775.

[PRICE ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE.]

THE
CHOLERIC MAN

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D. U. Y. L. N. E.

Printed by J. G. Smith, at the
theatre, in the Strand.

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DEDICATION.

TO DETRACTION.

High and Mighty Sir,

THE attention, with which you have been pleased to distinguish this inconsiderable production, makes it a duty with me to lay it at your feet. The applauses of the Theatre gave me assurance of its success, but it was your testimony alone, which could inspire me with any opinion of its merit: Nor is it on this occasion only I am to thank you; in whatever proportion I have been happy enough to attract the regards of the public, in the same degree I have never failed being honoured with your's.

How I have merited these marks of your partiality I am not able to guess: I can take my conscience to witness, I have paid you no sacrifice, devoted no time or study to your service, nor am a man in any respect qualified to repay your favors: Give me credit, therefore, when I tell you, that your liberality oppresses me. Was I apt to rate my pretensions highly, and presume upon the indulgence of the public, I might have some claim to your favor; but 'till you hear me complain that my reward is not equal to my merit, I pray you let me enjoy my content and my obscurity.

At the same time that I would gladly withdraw myself from your notice, I have no one in my eye whom I would wish to recommend to it: It is my desire to put you at your ease; worn out as you must needs be with the toils of your employment; and I seriously protest to you, that if your silence will be the consequence of mine, I am ready to enter with you into articles whenever you think fit; convinced that I can never benefit mankind so much as by procuring you a lasting repose; nor would you be long to seek for a retreat; there are many market-towns in the country

where you may drink your tea in quiet with a reputable set of elderly maidens at a distance from the capital. Above all things I should humbly recommend it to you, to relieve yourself from your labours in the dramatic walk: Consider, Sir, the campaign is now opening; I understand it will be an active one; new competitors will be pressing forward in the field of fame; I could wish you to keep out of their way; enervated as you are by past excesses, you will be ill able to struggle with these young and maiden spirits; but if you must engage, let it, I pray you, be with some of your intimates, if you find any on the ground; and do not pursue those ministerial politics, hitherto adopted by you, of bestowing all your favours on your opposers, and letting your friends go without their reward.

Whilst I am consulting your future repose, do not think I am unmindful of your past renown: It is to you alone, *Most mighty Sir*, we owe the great increase of *news-papers* (not to mention *magazines*, *reviews*, &c.) in this metropolis. In former times, the world was contented with a stale recital of *foreign and domestic occurrences*, which never came to pass, and a lame account of *casualties*, where no mischief was ever done; now the reader is convey'd under your auspices to the foot of the throne; you have the key that admits him into the cabinets of all the princes in Europe; nay, you can carry him a dance thro' the air, as familiarly as the lame devil did the scholar of Salamanca, and uncover the roofs of our closets and chambers to his view: The world is not only supplied with a faithful history of the times in our public prints, but every private family, thro' your means, may meet its own secret *Atalantis*. These are advantages, which some people of confined notions have not clearly understood, and have rashly proceeded to oppose the tyranny of the law against the freedom of the press; pains and penalties have been inflicted, mulcts and imprisonments have been put in force against the conductors of your undertaking; but, thanks to our excellent constitution, you still enjoy your full liberty, though many of your partisans are abridg'd of theirs.

The

DEDICATION.

V

The personal, political and literary characters of men are the three great branches of your study; eminent have been your researches in each; but it is not within the compass of this dedication to follow you thro' any but the latter, and that in the dramatic division only: And here I observe your ordinary practice hath been as follows:

When any play, like this now submitted to the public, meets a favourable reception on its first appearance, the very next morning by break of day out comes your manifesto; unravels the whole plot and contrivance of the drama, dissects the characters, detects the plagiarisms, and kindly tells the town what it is to expect; and all this is the dark operation of one midnight hour, while the poor romantic author lies wrapt perhaps in golden dreams of happiness and success: The consequence of this manifesto is, the clearing up of many mistakes which the public would else be apt to make: They who have been pleas'd, being told they ought not to have been pleas'd, go no more and avoid an error in judgement; they who would have gone, stay at home and save their money; the performers, whom success might have made giddy, are now prevented from over-acting their several parts, and seasonably kept down; the author, whom the plaudits of a theatre might have intoxicated to that phrenzy of sensibility, in which we are told that * *Philippides the comic poet* expired, is kept in due regimen, and under no danger of losing the moderate share of senses you allow him: Thus you stand, like the admonishing slave in the triumph, to remind the conqueror that *he is a man*; if therefore the shouts of the people are loud, you hallow in his ear, so as to be heard above the cry; if they are moderate, you whisper; but where the people are silent, the admonition is unnecessary; and whenever your own friends mount the carr, your delicacy in their instance is conspicuous, by the profound taciturnity you observe.

* *Philippides quoque Comædiarum poeta haud ignobilis, quum in certamine poetarum, præter se non videret, at latissime gauderet, inter illud gaudium repente mortuus est.*

In the instance of the present imperfect performance (thus laid at your feet) I have had opportunity to experience your concern for me in a peculiar manner: Ill-health, and other melancholy attentions, which I need not explain to you, kept me at a distance from the scene of its decision; on this occasion you redoubled your admonitions, apprehensive, no doubt, that I should give way to the flattering report of my friends, and fearful that I should yield to that weakness, of which the mind, when under the visitation of affliction, is evidently most susceptible.

Nor is this the only error I might have fallen into, I must confess to you I had vainly flatter'd myself with the design of addressing this Comedy not to you, *Highb and Mighty Sir*, but to an amiable and elegant friend, to a lady whose criticisms under favour differ as widely from your's, as *Shakespeare* does from the author of the *Choleric Man*: This lady, Sir, (whose name I forbear to mention, as it is unknown to you) was called upon in defence of a countryman to enter the lists, tho' the mildest of human beings, with the renowned *Voltaire* (I do not disguise his name from you, because I think on certain subjects, especially where Christianity is concerned, you have sometimes taken part with him): The spectators of the combat gave the victory to the lady; the action is recorded in pure English; but if you please to turn to the particulars of the attack, which was on her side, you will find it conducted upon principles so opposite to your own, that you will probably differ in opinion from the rest of mankind and give your palm to her antagonist: You I know would have proceeded according to all the rules of modern finesse, sapping, undermining and blowing up; working like a mole out of sight, and over-turning all things in confusion and ruin; she, in the spirit of ancient times, carried on her approaches in open day-light and above ground, combating with such weapons only, as *Greece* and *Rome* had put into her hands under the plain guidance and direction of her own wit and judgement: To this lady, in pure affection and esteem, I had purposed to have inscribed this Comedy; but when you told me

it was not worthy even of my poor genius, how could I suppose it a fit tribute to her's? She will therefore in the simple phrase accept the will for the deed; and if she should chance upon refusal to dissent from the opinion you have given in the case, I must beseech her to distrust herself, and to believe there is one quality, very apt to mislead and be misled, which she possesses in a greater degree (it possible) than either wit or judgement, and that is called (pardon my introducing it into your presence) *Benevolence*.

How ridiculous should I have made myself, if, following the false lights of popular applause, I had presented this *heterogeneous* piece (as you are pleased to call it) to one, whose genius might have merited the original from whence it pretends to be derived; not the *'Squire of Alsatia* I mean, but the *Adelphi of Terence*; With respect to the above-mentioned *'Squire*, which I understand is the offspring of Mr. *Shadwell*, if I have ignorantly robb'd him of any part of his patrimony, I hope it will not be imputed to me; for I do seriously declare that to my knowledge I never saw him, or ever had any commerce or acquaintance with him, or knew, 'till you informed me, that he had so respectable a father: It is to you therefore, *ingenious Sir*, I am indebted for the discovery that I have lost sight of an original which I pretended to have copied, and copied one which I really never saw.

But I would beg leave humbly to observe that the plot of *Terence* was never in my contemplation; it requires the genius of Mr. *Mason* to make the Grecian simplicity live on our stage; I dare not attempt it even at your command; but if you wish to have it tried, go to your *Terence*, you will find it ingeniously and ably translated, and bring his *Brothers* on the theatre; I fear even my illegitimate race, if tried by a jury of English freeholders, will oust the representative of the heir apparent, nay the very heir himself, if he was to come in his own person to assert his right.

Athens and *London*, Most *Mighty Sir*, cannot as I conceive be easily compared: In your department I am apprised how much advantage dwells with the latter; in mine we are grievously worsted: I have ventured

to hint to you in the dull *prologue* I have prefac'd; that there were at least fifty comic poets flourishing at one period in *Athens*, and most of these lived to write more plays than all our fraternity now alive put together; tho' you I believe may think some of us have already written more than enough. **Menander*, learned Sir, you well know is said to have written 80, or according to some, 180 Comedies, and that they were all translated by *Terence*; but if we take the testimony of ¶ *Apollodorus*, the number will amount according to his computation to 105, and the same authority tells us that out of these 105 Comedies, *Menander* carried away but eight prizes, while § *Euripides*, as *Varro* informs us, on the other hand, out of 75 Tragedies was victorious only in five. These instances will suffice to give us some idea of the comparative state of genius in the two places and periods.

Amongst all these plays and all these poets, which the Athenian stage can boast, I should doubt if you could have found half the employment which our scanty fraternity at home afford you: Be pleased, learned Sir, to try your skill upon any one of *Aristophanes's* comedies; take his † *Clouds* for instance; if you was literally in the clouds you could not be more to seek; and unless Dr. *Johnson*, or Mrs. *Carter* will take you by the hand (and how that should be I don't know) you will never get thro' the fog—Turn over a Fragment of † *Philemon*; what do you think of it? Write a column in the news-papers upon it; is it not as heterogeneous a thing as the *Ebolic Man*? Cast your eye over those passages of || *Diphilus*; do you see no

* *Scripti* (sc *Menander*) *Suidâ* teste 80 *Comædias*, vel secundum alios 180, qui etiam a *Terentio* conversas esse omnesq. intercuisse asserunt.

¶ *Ex istis tamen centum et quinque omnibus, solis cum* (sc *Menandrum*) *esse vicisse idem Apollodorus eodem in libro scripsit. A GELL. xvii. iv.*

§ *Euripidem quoq; M Varro ait, quum quinque et septuaginta tragædias scripserit in quinque solis vicisse.*

† *Nepheas.*

† *Philemon* lived in the time of *Alexander the Great*; he was a writer of the New Comedy, and is said by *Suidas* to have written ninety plays.

|| *Diphilus* was also a writer of the New Comedy; he wrote 100 plays, and some of these it is said were copied by *Plautus*.

resemblance to the *Squire of Alsatia*? It was as well known to *Diphilus*, as it is to me.

But there remains a word to be said on some learned animadversions of your's, entitled *An Essay on the Theatre*, in which you profess to draw a *Comparison between Laughing and Sentimental Comedy*; and in which you are pleased evidently to point some observations at my comedy of the *Fashionable Lover*: You insinuate that every blockhead can write *Sentimental or pathetic Comedy*; that *Terence* appears to have made the *nearest approaches*, tho' without confounding the different provinces; and yet that he is reproached by *Cæsar* for wanting the *vis comica*; but that all the other comic writers of antiquity take the walk of ridicule, and cautiously avoid incroaching on the confines of tragedy; nay that *Terence* himself judiciously stops short before he comes to the * *downright* pathetic.

By this specimen of your acquaintance with the comic writers of antiquity, most learned Sir, I suspect that from the great attention you have bestowed upon the moderns, you have had little to spare to their predecessors; for if it is your opinion that *Terence* of all the ancient comic poets made the *nearest approaches* to the *pathetic*, I fear you will have an host of authorities to combat? § *Varro* decrees the province of the *Manners* to *Titinnius* and *Terence*; but that of the *Pathetic* to *Trabea*, *Attilius* and *Cæcilius*: You have here three comic poets of the Roman stage, all of which, according to the testimony of *Varro* the most learned of the Romans, *approached* nearer to the *pathetic* than *Terence*. But let us hear the opinion of *C. Cæsar* in this question, to whom you refer us, and tell us

* *Terence* seems to have made the *nearest Approaches*, yet always judiciously stops short before he comes to the downright pathetic; and yet he is even reproached by *Cæsar* for wanting the *Vis comica*. All the other comic writers of antiquity aim only at rendering folly or vice ridiculous, but never exalt their characters into buskin'd pomp, or make what *Voltaire* humorously calls a tradesman's tragedy. ANONY.

§ *To ceteros nulli alii servare convenit quam Titinnio et Terentio; Pathe vero Trabea et Attilius et Cæcilius facile moverant.* (Varr. de Lat. Sermones.)

DEDICATION.

that he reproach'd Terence for being deficient in the *vis comica*, and this no doubt because he had such leanings, such *approaches to the pathetic*: The lines, which convey this reproach will be found below in the † note; they appear to me to be expressive of a most tender affection and respect to the memory of a favourite author; and I wish, *illustrious Sir*, you would think so well of them as to convey your reproaches in the like terms; my brethren would not complain, and I should be a great gainer. But let us consider these expressions of *Cæsar's*; I do not discover any allusion to the *pathetic*: He calls him *puri sermonis amator*; and this indeed accords with § *Cicero's* description; but I am apt to think that neither in this expression, nor in that of *Lenibus Scriptis* any reference is made to the *pathetic*, and I am strengthened in this opinion by an observation of *Tanaquillus Faber* on this very passage: * *Cæsar thought* (says the commentator) *that Terence, in moving the passions, was inferior to some others, which indeed is the case; and Cæsar's opinion is confirmed by the decree of Varro, the most learned of the Romans.* This truly is to the point, if we are to credit the authority above-mentioned; and he proceeds to say, † *Thus you see that nothing is left to Terence but The Manners: The Pathetic, which requires force and energy, especially in the comic province, is ascribed to others.* By this reference you see we have not only gained an authority for my interpretation of *Cæsar's* words, but we have found a learned critic, who is

† Tu quoque tu in summis; O dimidiata Menander,
Poneris, et merito, puri sermonis amator;

Lenibus atque utinam scriptis adjuncta foret Vis
Comica, ut æquato virtus polleret honore

Cum Græcis, neque in hac despectus parte jaceres,

Unum hoc mæceror et doleo tibi deesse, Terenti.

§ Quidquid come loquens ac omnia dulcia dicens.

Nempe hoc sentiebat Terentium in movendis pathetis inferiorum
quibusdam poetis esse, quod profecto verum est, et judicium Cæsar's sen-
tentia Varronis, qui Romanorum doctissimus fuit, confirmatur.

† Vides to ethos Terentio relictum, nil aliud: To pathos, quod
vim et impetum postulat, præsertim in genere comico, aliis concedi.
hardy

hardy enough to assert, that the *pathetic* is the very essence of the *vis comica*, or in other words, *requires force and energy*, especially in the comic province; the very opposite doctrine to what you, most learned Sir, have maintained.

So much for *Terence*; as for all the other Comic Writers of antiquity, I am at a loss to know whether you refer to the whole bulk of them in general, meaning all such of whose writings we have any fragments or descriptions; or whether you mean *all the others*, whose plays have come down to us entire; or in other words, *all the two*, viz. *Aristophanes* and *Plautus*—But we will take a short examination of the case.

If you mean to refer generally to the bulk of Greek and Roman writers of comedy, the question is in part answer'd by *Varro*, (as above quoted) who declares that *Trabea*, *Atilius* and *Cæcilius* excelled in *sentimental* or *pathetic* comedy: This will satisfy us as to the Roman stage; the Greek theatre, being original, was more various: Comedy took different characters at different periods: * *The Ancient Comedy* was personal and licentious, for then the government of *Athens* was democratical; *Aristophanes*, *Cratinus*, *Eupolis*, *Pherecrates*, and many others rank under this department; they lash'd the vices of mankind with singular severity; the generals, judges, treasurers, the people themselves, nay the most illustrious and most virtuous citizens were not exempt from their satire. Their invectives however were frequently resented; *Eupolis* in particular was cast into the sea and drowned, either because he had satyriz'd the *Baptæ*, in his comedy so call'd, or at the command of *Alcibiades*, whom he had lampooned. This circumstance and the transition of power from the people to the nobles introduced that species of comedy call'd † *The Middle*; of this sort we are told was the *Eclogicon* of *Aristophanes*, the *Ulysses* of *Cratinus*, and many others, which contain no personal invective, but have for the object of their

* *Vetus Comædia.*

† *Media.*

ridicule certain passages in, or allusions to, the ancient poets, or parodies and travesties upon the eminent tragedies; thus *Cratinus* in the comedy above mentioned ridicules the *Odyssæy*, and thus the transition was made from person to performance, much to the advantage of society: Your transitions, *learned Sir*, on the contrary, are often from performance to person; This however is certain that the writers of the *ancient* or *middle comedy* made few, if any, *approaches* towards the *pathetic*, and so far your assertion is well founded.

But in the † *new comedy*, of which *Menander* is at the head, the case is widely different; the Wits of *Athens* became exceedingly cautious how they indulged their vein for satire, least by any means their invective might be applied to any of the *Macedonian* princes, late *Alexander's* generals, of whose power they stood in extream awe. Comedy now assumed an aspect entirely different; the fragments of *Menander*, *Philemon*, *Diphilus*, *Posidippus*, || *Apollodorus* *Gelous*, and others, consist of moral sententious passages, elegant in their phrase, but grave, and many of them, especially those of *Diphilus*, of a religious cast, as may be seen by refering to them.

Numberless quotations might be adduced to prove this to have been the character and complexion of the *new comedy* under *Menander* and his fraternity; *Quintilian* says of *Menander* that he is *omnibus rebus, personis, affectibus accommodatus*. † *Dion Chrysostom* speaking of his stile, says it is *imitatio omnium morum et gratiarum*; and if we may credit * *Clemens Alexandrinus*, many passages in *Menander* are

† *Novæ---Novæ Comædiæ Menander fuit facile princeps.*

|| *The Hecyra and Phormio of Terence are said, by Donatus, to be taken from Apollodorus.*

† *Namque Menandri imitatio omnium morum et gratiarum omnem superavit veterum comicorum vehementiam.*

* *Menander novæ comædiæ princeps unanimiter omnium ore proclamatur, et proinde justare sibi nomine locum vindicare visus est; quoniam istius sententiæ pleræque, ab Hebræorum vatibus desumptæ, quasi paraphrasis quorundam prophetarum dictorum sunt. Testis est Clemens Alexandrinus, lib. 5. quotation.*

Jac. Hertel præfatio.

copied from the *Hebrew prophets*: And it is remarkable that such was the elegance and urbanity of the *Athenian comic poets* under this class, at least such it appear'd to *Cicero*, that he groups them with the *Socratic philosophers*. It will appear therefore that *sentiment* or the *pathetic* in comedy was not neglected by the ancients; that *Terence* so far from having made the *nearest approaches* to the *pathetic*, was accused of being deficient in it, and others for that very reason prefer'd before him, that with respect to *all the other comic writers of antiquity*; it cannot be asserted that *ridicule* was their sole aim; for tho' it may in general be so pronounced of the *ancient and middle comedy*, yet the writers of the *new comedy*, (who are by far the most numerous and most celebrated) come by no means under that description. As to the position that *they never exalt their characters into buskin'd pomp*, &c. the § prologue to the very first play in *Plautus*, *learned Sir*, well set you right in that particular; wherein *Mercury* announces not a *tradesman's tragedy* indeed, but a *tragi-comedy*.

And now, Sir, having address'd you under your general title, do not believe that I mean to mark you out by any particular one: Your correspondence with me, you well know, has always been *anonymous*, except in the case of one unhappy gentleman, and he has fled his country. As for you, Sir, wherever you inhabit, and whatever is your fortune, I bear you no ill-will; my character I will keep out of your reach, and for my writings I shall not much differ in opinion from you about them: If you pursue the same studies with me, good luck attend you; give your own works a good word, and be silent about mine; for if it shall please the Giver of my life to spare it, I hope soon to present to my countrymen something more worthy of their approbation, and less dependent upon your's. I am, &c. &c.

The Author.

§ Quid contraxisti frontem? quia tragediam
Dixi futuram hanc?

PLAUT. AMPH.

P R O L O G U E.

By the AUTHOR of the COMEDY.

Spoken by Mr. SMITH.

IN Athens once, as classic story runs,
Thalia number'd fifty living sons;
But mark the waste of time's destructive hand,
One bard survives of all this numerous band;
Yet human genius seem'd as 'twould defy
Time's utmost rage by its variety,
For 'twas no wond'rous harvest, in those days,
From one rich stock to reap a hundred plays.
Ah! could we bring but one of these to light,
We'd give a hundred such as this to-night.
Rome from her captive took the law she gave,
And was at once her mistress and her slave;
Greece from her fall immortal triumphs drew,
And prov'd her tutel'ar Minerva true:
She, goddess-like, confiding in her charms,
To Mars resign'd the barren toil of arms,
Full well assur'd, when these vain toils were past,
That wit must triumph over strength at last;
Then smiling saw her Athens meet its doom,
And crown'd her in the theatres of Rome;
Nor murmur'd Rome to see her Terence shod
With the same sock in which Menander trod,
Nor Lælius scorn'd, nor Scipio blush'd to fit,
And join their plaudits to Athenian wit.
Micio's mild virtue and mad Demæa's rage,
With bursts alternate shook the echoing stage;
And from these models 'tis your poet draws
His best, his only hope of your applause.
A tale it is to chace that angry spleen,
Which forms the mirth and moral of his scene;
A tale for noble and ignoble ear,
Something for fathers and for sons to hear:
And should you on your bumbler bard bestow,
That grace which Rome to her's was pleas'd to show,
Advantage with the modern fairly lies,
Who, less deserving, gains as great a prize.

EPILOGUE.

By Mr. GARRICK.

Spoken by Mrs. ABINGTON.

AS I'm an Artist, can my skill do better,
Than paint your pictures? for I'm much your debtor:
I'll draw the out-lines—finish at my leisure,
A groupe like you wou'd be a charming treasure!
Here is my pencil, here my sketching book,
Where for this work, I memorandums took;
I will in full, three quarters, and profile,
Take your sweet faces, nay, your thoughts I'll steal;
From my good friends above, their wives and doxies,
Down to Madame, and Monsieur, in the boxes:
Now for it, Sirs!—I beg from top to bottom,
You'll keep your features fix'd 'till I have got 'em.
First for Fine Gentlemen my fancy stretches—
They'll be more like, the slihter are the sketches:
Such unembodied form invention racks;
Pale cheeks, dead eyes, thin bodies, and long backs;
They would be best in shades, or virgin wax.
To make Fine Ladies like, the toil is vain,
Unless I paint 'em o'er and o'er again:
In frost, tho' not a flower, its charms discloses,
They can, like hot-houses, produce their roses.
At you, Coquettes, my pencil now takes aim!
In love's Change-Alley playing all the game;
I'll paint you ducklings waddling out quite lame.
The Prude's most virtuous spite, I'll next pourtray;
Railing at gaming—loving private play.
Quitting the gay bon-ton, and wou'd be witty,
I come to you, my Patrons, in the city:
I like your honest, open, English looks;
They show too—that you well employ your cooks!
Have at you now—Nay, Misser—pray don't stir,
Hold up your head, your fat becomes you, Sir;
Leer with your eyes—as thus—now, smirk—well done!
You're ogling, Sir—a haunch of venison.
Some of you fickle Patriots I shall pass,
Such brittle beings, will be best on glass.

Now

E P I L O G U E.

Now Courtiers you--looks meant your thoughts to smother;
 Hands fixt on one thing—eyes upon another;
 For Politicians, I have no dark tints,
 Such clouded brows are fine for wooden prints.
 To distant climes if modern Jasons roam,
 And bring the Golden Fleece with curses home,
 I'll blacken them with Indian ink—but then
 My hands, like theirs, will ne'er be clean again.
 Though last, not least in love, I come to * YOU!
 And 'tis, with rapture, nature's sons I view;
 With warmest tints shall glow your jolly faces,
 Joy, love, and laughter, there have fix'd their places,
 Free from weak nerves, bon-ton, ennui, and foreign graces.
 I'll tire you now no more with pencil strictures;
 I'll copy these—next week send home your pictures.

* To the Galleries.

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

Andrew Nightshade,	— Mr. KING,
Manlove,	— Mr. AICKIN,
Stapleton,	— Mr. PACKER,
Charles Manlove,	— Mr. REDDISH,
Jack Nightshade,	— Mr. WESTON,
Dibble,	— Mr. BADDELEY,
Gregory,	— Mr. MOODY,
Frampton,	— Mr. WALDRON,
Frederick,	— Mr. WRIGHT.

W O M E N.

Mrs. Stapleton,	— Mrs. HOPKINS,
Lætitia,	— Mrs. ABINGTON.
Lucy,	— Miss POPE,

CHOLERIC MAN.

ACT I.

SCENE I. MANLOVE's Chambers.

(FRAMPTON at his desk; MANLOVE enters as from his walk; FRAMPT. rises and meets him with some papers.)

FRAMPTON.

YOU have lengthen'd your walk this morning.

MANLOVE.

Very likely: The gardens were pleasant, and I believe I have rather exceeded my usual stint.

FRAMPTON.

By just one turn upon the terrace.

MANLOVE.

You measur'd me, I see: We men of business, Frampton, contract strange habits of regularity.

FRAMPTON.

And bachelors too, Sir.

MANLOVE.

Very true, very true: A wife now and then does put a man a little out of method, I have heard. Is any body waiting?

FRAMPTON.

No body.

B

MAN.

MAN LOVE.

Any cases?

FRAMPTON.

Several. (*Gives him papers.*)

MAN LOVE.

Bless me! was the world of my mind, they would patch up their differences over a bottle, and let the grass grow in our Inns of court. Let me see—what have we got here?—(*reads*)—*A detects B plucking turnips out of his field, &c.*—Here's a fellow for you, he'll go to law with the Crows for picking worms out of his dunghill; Prosecute a fellow-creature for a turnip? A turnip be his damages!

FRAMPTON.

And his food too, at least till he's a better man.

MAN LOVE.

*Nicholas Swanstin, taylor, in Threadneedle Street, would be glad to know how to proceed in a legal way against his wife, in a case of cohabitancy—*Had you any fee with this case?

FRAMPTON.

A light guinea, Sir.

MAN LOVE.

'Tis more than a light woman deserves! Give the taylor his guinea again; bid him proceed to his work, and leave a good-for-nothing wife to go on with her's; and hark'ee, Frampton, you seem to want a new coat, suppose you let him take your measure; the fellow, you see, would fain be cutting out work for the lawyers. Send Mr. Dibble hither. Oh, he is come.

(*DIBBLE enters with papers. FRAMPTON retires to his desk.*)

Mr. Dibble, have you got Miss Fairfax's papers?

DIBBLE.

They are in my hand, Sir.

MAN LOVE.

Have you copied my opinion upon the will?

DIBBLE.

THE CHOLERIC MAN.

3

DIBBLE.

It is ready for signing.

(Dibble gives him a pen, and Manlove signs a paper.)

MANLOVE.

There, Sir. You've compar'd it, no doubt: Put the papers under one enclosure, and carry them to Miss Fairfax's; make my respects, and say I will have the honour of waiting on her this forenoon, and stating some particulars in my opinion that may want explaining.

DIBBLE.

I shall, Sir. *(Goes to the table and puts up the papers.)*

MANLOVE.

Are you ready, Frampton? you and I must step to the hall. How we appear to that spruce gentleman! His father wore a livery; his sister is waiting-woman to Miss Fairfax, the very lady he is going to in that monkey habit: Is there no persuading him to suit his dress to his condition? Believe me, Frampton, there is much good sense in old distinctions: When the law lays down its full-bottom'd perriwig, you will find less wisdom in bald pates than you are aware of. *(Exeunt.)*

DIBBLE. *(Alone.)*

What a damn'd queer figure old Frampton makes of himself? I must never show him at our Sunday's club, never. The Counsellor's little better: It does well enough for chamber practice, but he cou'dn't walk the hall in that wig: It's nothing now unless a good club of hair peeps under the tye: I hope shortly to see the day when Westminster-hall shall be able to count cues with the Parade.—*(He sits down. A knocking at the door.)*—Who's at the door? Come in: You expect now I should rise and open it: No! I, in faith, do that office for yourself, or stay where you are.—Ah, Gregory, is it you! what wind blew you hither? what witch brought you at her back?

B 2

SCENE

THE CHOLERIC MAN

SCENE II.

Enter GREGORY.

GREGORY.

No witch, but an old bone-setting mare, with a heavy cloak-bag at her crupper, that has play'd a bitter tune upon my ribs. Where's his honour, Master Dibble?

DIBBLE.

Out. Give me hold of thy hand, old boy. What's the best news in your parts? Hav'n't earth'd old Surly-Boots yet?

GREGORY.

Earth'd him! no such luck; he's a tough morsel. He's above ground, as my head can testify.

(Shows his scull.)

DIBBLE.

Why that's action and battery with a vengeance.

GREGORY.

Battery! he knows the strength of my scull, as well as a sand-man knows the back of his ass, and cudgels it as often: But he's hard at hand—When will his honour, Manlove, be at home?

DIBBLE.

Presently, presently. What brings your old blade hither?

GREGORY.

The old errand: a little bit of law; a small jig to the tune of John Doe and Richard Roe; that's all.

DIBBLE.

Plaintiff, I bet five to one. But how does my playmate, Jack? how fares it with young Hopeful?

GREGORY.

Gads-my-life; well remember'd! here's a writing for you: 'Tis a merciless scrawl to be sure; he's not at all come on in his running-hand, not at all; no, tho' I talk to him, and talk to him, and tell him what a fine young man his brother Charles is here, Mr. Manlove I must call him now; for his honour,
I am

THE CHOLERIC MAN.

5

I am told, since his return from travel, has nominated him afresh after himself, hasn't he, Master Dibble?

DIBBLE.

Ay, ay; 'twas done last sessions; he's no longer Charles Nightshade, but Charles Manlove, Esq. and a brave estate he's got by the exchange.

GREGORY.

All these things I ding into the ears of our young scape-grace, Jack; but I might as well whistle the birds from the sky, as talk him out of his tricks, mobbing with the carter-fellows, and scampering after the maids: All the while too the arch knave contrives to blind the eyes of old Cholerick, his father, sitting as demure as a cat, till he is fairly in for his evening's nap, then away goes he, like hey-go-mad, all the parish over. Well, have you made out his letter?

DIBBLE.

I'll attempt to read it to you.

Dear Pickle,

Old Cholerick is setting off for London, and thinks to leave me in the country, but it won't do: Must have another brush with the lads at the Bear: intend to be at brother Charles's on Wednesday at noon, where you'll meet me. Old Trusty carries this, and understands trap: Mum's the word. Thine,

JOHN NIGHTSHADE.

So you are privy to this trip, Gregory.

GREGORY.

To be sure, Master Dibble; we are all of his side: There is not a servant wou'd peach, if he was to commit murder amongst 'em.

DIBBLE.

Indeed! But hold, here is more over the leaf. Gregory says I was of age last Lammass, if you know of ever a clean tight wench, that will take me out of old Cholerick's clutches, I don't care if I buckle too for life. N. B. She must have the Spanish, or the bait won't take.

So,

6 THE CHOLERIC MAN

So, so! he's for a wife you see: Has he ever talk'd to you in this strain?

GREGORY.

Now and then; but I always tell him 'tis time to think of marrying when the old badger is in the earth.

DIBBLE.

Pooh! you're to blame: We'll make a man of him; we'll set him up with a wife. I have a girl in my eye; a friend of my own—provided you will bear a hand in the business.

GREGORY.

Bear a hand, Master Dibble! You are a lawyer and can take care of yourself, I'm a poor servant and have a character to lose.

DIBBLE.

Well, well; but if I pay you for your character, and your service into the bargain, every thing has its price you know.

GREGORY.

To be sure, there's no denying that: But, hark! here comes his honour Manlove.

DIBBLE.

Enough—Where are you lodg'd?

GREGORY.

At Mr. Stapleton's, in New Broad-Street: I'm going thither after I've seen the counsellor.

DIBBLE.

Better and better still: I'm going thither too, and will wait for you below in the square: we can discuss my scheme by the way.

[Exit.]

GREGORY.

What a sharp bitten vermin it is! Ah! these lawyers have all their wits about 'em.

SCENE III.

MANLOVE and GREGORY.

MANLOVE.

What, Gregory! and without thy master? Where's my brother Nightshade? Thou and he are seldom parted, I believe.

GRE.

THE CHOLERIC MAN.

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GREGORY.
 Troth, Sir, I hope heaven will take some consideration of that, and set off the sins of my youth against the sufferings of my old age. The 'Squire is at hand.

MAN LOVE.
 Well, and what business calls him up to town?

GREGORY.
 Please your honour he is fallen out with our parson.

MAN LOVE.
 About rythes?

GREGORY.
 Lack-a-day! he has been non-suited upon that score over and over—'Tis about game.

MAN LOVE.
 Game, quotha! if he comes to talk to me about hares and partridges, Gregory, I won't hear of it: Such laws, and such law-suits are the disgrace of the country—I won't hear a word upon the subject.

GREGORY.
 It's quite a breach; he has totally left off going to church himself, and forbade all his family; nay, what's more, he has broke his back-gammon tables, only because the parson taught him the game. Mercy o' me, that ever your honour and my old master shou'd be born of the same mother.

MAN LOVE.
 Of the same mother, but very different fathers, Gregory: Doom'd from early youth to a life merely mercantile, his days have been pass'd between a counting-house at Rotterdam, and the cabin of a Dutch dogger; precious universities! One son, indeed, he allow'd me to rescue from his hands, and to him I have given a public education; the other poor lad has been a bird of his own breeding.

GREGORY.
 And a precious bird he is! such another lapwing! Skitting here, and skitting there; sometimes above, sometimes below: No wonder he's so wild when his schooling

Schooling has been under the hedges; but I hear my old master on the stairs. Good morning to your honour—I must budge onwards to Mr. Stapleton's.

MAN LOVE.

Gregory, good morning.

SCENE IV.

Enter NIGHTSHADE.

NIGHTSHADE (*Speaks as he enters.*)

I tell you, fellow, there's your fare: I'll not give you a farthing over. A hard shilling indeed! a hard coach if you please!—Brother Manlove, your servant! This town grows worse and worse; no conscience, no police—If I was not the most patient man alive, such things would turn my brain—Brother Manlove, I say, your servant.

MAN LOVE.

Brother Andrew, you are welcome. You seem'd a little ruffled, so I waited for its subsiding; and now give me your hand: I am glad to see you in town, provided the occasion be agreeable.

NIGHTSHADE.

I think the law has a proviso for every thing: Your compliment sets off, like the preamble of a statute, and your conclusion limps after like the clause at the tail of it. So you keep your old apartments, and as slovenly as ever—Lincoln's-Inn and the law—so runs your life. A turn upon the Terrace after breakfast, a mutton chop for dinner at the Rolls, and the evening papers at the Mount, wind up your day.

MAN LOVE.

A narrow scale, I own; but whether it be that I was made too small for grandeur, or grandeur be too small for happiness, I never could entertain both guests together, so I took the humblest of the two, and left the other for my betters.

NIGHT-

THE CHOLERIC MAN.

NIGHTSHADE.

Ay, 'tis too late to alter; 'twou'd be a vain endeavour to correct your temper at these years.—By the way, brother, your stair-case is the dirtiest I ever saw my foot upon.

MAN LOVE.

So long as we have clean dealings within, our clients will make no complaint. Your's, I warrant, was neater at Rotterdam?

NIGHTSHADE.

Neater! 'tis matter of astonishment to me, how you that have a plentiful estate, can make yourself a slave to business, and drudge away your life in such a hole as this!

MAN LOVE.

True, Andrew, 'twas unreasonable; but as I have now made over the best part of my estate to your son, so I think I have answered the best part of your objection.

NIGHTSHADE.

You shall excuse me, all the world cries out upon your folly; you are apt to be a little hasty, else I should be free to tell you, you have made yourself ridiculous; and what is worse, Brother Charles, I speak to you as a father, you have undone my son.

MAN LOVE.

How so? have I confin'd him in his education?

NIGHTSHADE.

No, faith; the scale on which you've finish'd him is wide enough to take in vice and folly at full size; his principles won't cramp their growth. At school he was grounded in impudence, the University confirm'd him in ignorance, and the grand tour stock'd him with infidelity and bad pictures—such has been his education.

MAN LOVE.

But you, in your wisdom, pursued a different course with your younger son.

NIGHTSHADE.

I bred him as a rational creature should be bred, under the rod of discipline, under the lash of my own arm; I gave him a sober, frugal, godly training; and mark the difference between us—Your fellow lives here in this great city, in a round of pleasures, in the front of the fashion, squandering and revelling:—Mine abides patiently in the country, toiling and travelling; early at his duty, sparing at his meals, patient of fatigue; he hears no music as Charles does, purchases no fine pictures, lolls in no fine chariot, befools himself with no fine women; no, thank my stars, I've rescued one of my boys; Jack at least treads in the steps of his father.

MAN LOVE.

I hope he will; better principles I cannot wish him; but methinks, Andrew, a little more knowledge of the world——

NIGHTSHADE.

Knowledge of the world, Brother Charles! who knows so much? Belike you never heard then I had made three trips to Shetland, in a herring-buss, before you was born? have been three times charter'd to Statia for muscovadoes; twice to Zante for currants, and made one voyage to Bencoolen for pepper.

MAN LOVE.

Yes, and that pepper-voyage runs in your blood still:

NIGHTSHADE.

So much the better; it will preserve my wits, it will season my understanding from such flyblown folly as your's. Zooks! you to talk of knowledge of the world! where should you come by it? upon Clapham-Common? upon Bansted-Downs? Did you ever see the pike of Teneriffe, the rock of Gibraltar, or even the Bishop and his Clerks? I know 'em all, your charts, and your coasting-pilots; I have been two nights and a day upon a sandbank in the Grecian Islands;

THE CHOLERIC MAN.

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Islands; and do you talk to me of knowledge of the world?

MAN LOVE.

Let us change the subject then—you have not told me what brings you out of the country.

NIGHTSHADE.

Because there's no abiding in it; what with refractory tenants, poaching parsons, enclosing 'squires, navigation schemes, and turnpike meetings, there's no keeping peace about me; no, tho' I've commenc'd fourteen suits at law, besides bye-battles at quarter-sessions, courts leet, and courts baron, innumerable.

MAN LOVE.

Indeed!

NIGHTSHADE.

No sooner do I put my head out of doors, but instantly some fellow meets me with a fowling piece on his shoulder, or a fishing-rod in his hand, or a greyhound at his horse's heels, and all to disturb and destroy my property.

MAN LOVE.

I say property! let your game look after themselves. Do you call a creature property, that lights upon my lands to-day, upon your's to-morrow, and the next perhaps in Norway? I reprobate all quarrels about guns, and dogs, and game; for my part I am pleas'd to see an Englishman with arms, whether he bears 'em for his own amusement, or for my defence.

NIGHTSHADE.

'Tis mighty well! I am a fool to waste my time with you; I shall look after my own game, in my own way; you may watch yours, the sparrows here in the garden, or the old duck in the fountain in the square; your science goes no farther, so your servant; if you want me, I shall be found at Mr. Stapleton's, in New Broad-street.

FREDERICK

C 2

MAN-

12 THE CHOLERIC MAN.

MANLOVE.

Hold, hold, I'm going there; I've business at Mr. Stapleton's; my chariot's at the door—I'll carry you. Who waits? (*Enter Servant*) Here, take this note to Mr. Manlove.

NIGHTSHADE.

Ay, that's your puppy; my name wasn't good enough it seems; but positively I'll not see him; if you bring him to me 'tis all in vain; I positively will not bear him in my presence. [*Exit.*]

MANLOVE.

That ever such a monster should exist, as an unnatural father! [*Exit.*]

SCENE V. *An Apartment in Charles Manlove's House.*

Enter C. MANLOVE, and FREDERICK his Servant.

C. MANLOVE.

Mr. Manlove dines with me to-day; lay two covers in the little parlour, and bid the cook be punctual to his hour.

FREDERICK.

To a minute, Sir. If Mr. Manlove dines here, dinner will be serv'd precisely as the clock is striking.

C. MANLOVE.

Set out the dumb waiter, and tell the men they need not attend. (*Frederick goes and speaks at the door.*)

Sir, you cannot come in; my master is not to be spoken with: Where are you pushing?

C. MANLOVE.

What's the matter, Frederick?

FREDERICK.

A country-like fellow says he must be admitted to speak with you in private; he will not be kept out.

(*Pulls the door to, and enters.*)

C. MANLOVE.

And why shou'd he?

FREDERICK

THE CHOLERIC MAN.

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FREDERICK.

I don't know; I cannot say I like his looks; I never saw a more suspicious person.

C. MANLOVE.

Well, let him in, however.

FREDERICK *opens the door and JACK enters.*

FREDERICK.

He has the true Tyburn marks about him. (*aside*)

CHARLES.

Brother!

FREDERICK.

Gad so, I'm wrong; I'll e'en make off. [*Exit.*]

SCENE VI.

CHA. MANLOVE, and JACK NIGHTSHADE.

JACK.

Hush! hush! don't blow me; snug's the word; close, close, and under the wind.

CHARLES.

I protest I scarce knew you, Jack; what brings you to town?

JACK.

Six hours, and as bright a gelding as ever was lapt in leather.

CHARLES.

But what's your business? did your father send you up?

JACK.

He send me up! where have you liv'd to ask the question? No, he has brought himself hither, and I stole a march after him: A freak; a frolick, that's all. Didlikins! what a flaming house you live in! Oh, I give you joy, brother; Uncle Manlove has clapt a new name upon you. Old Surly knows nothing of this trip. I had much ado to get to the speech of you: You've a mortal parcel of fine fellows below in your hall. But you are not angry at my coming? You'll not peach, I hope?

CHARLES.

CHARLES.

Honour forbid ! Thy lot, my dear boy, has been severe enough.

JACK.

Severe ! there's been no scarcity of that, I warrant you ; there's not a crab-stock in the neighbourhood, but what my shoulders have had a taste of it's fruit. Oh, you've a rare lot, Charles ! a happy rogue ! Look at me—Who wou'd think you and I were whelps of the same breed ? You are as sleek as my lady's lap-dog ; I am rough as a water-spaniel ; be-daggled and be-mir'd, as if I had come out of the fens with wild fowl : Why I have brought off as much soil upon my boots only, as wou'd set up a Norfolk farmer.

CHARLES.

Well, well, Jack, we'll soon get thee into better trim.

JACK.

Then you must thrust me into a case of your own, for I've no more coats than skins : Father, to be sure, keeps it well dusted ; but methinks I shou'd be strangely glad to see myself a gentleman for one hour or two.

CHARLES.

What can I do for you ? your father you say is in town ; a discovery wou'd be fatal : Do you know where he is lodg'd ?

JACK.

Not I truly ; but my amusements lead to places, where I shou'd be sure not to meet him : Only one night, dear Charles, and I'll be back again in the country ; think what a life mine is ; compare it with your own, and I'm sure you won't grudge me one day's frolick and away.

CHARLES.

I grudge you ! no—I wish you cou'd enjoy a brother's share in all my happiness, in all my fortune : Submit, however, to the necessity of your affairs
with

with a good grace ; humour the peculiarities of your father, and command me upon all worthy occasions.

JACK.

Why that's hearty, that's friendly now. Give me hold of your hand. Boddikins, I was afraid you wou'd have turn'd your back on me, now you have jump'd into such a fortune, but I see you are as honest a lad as ever : By the way, Father was in a damn'd hue at your changing your name—fierce as a panther ; no man dare enter his den. But you say you'll rigg me out for a day ; give me a good launch, Charles, and I warrant I'll find a harbour.

CHARLES.

There's my purse, Jack ; it contains enough to spend, and some to throw away : Frederick commands the wardrobe ; if you find any thing to your mind, take it ; if not, convene my taylor, he'll equip you in an instant : Follow your propensities, but take a little discretion to your aid ; your nature has not had much pruning, and 'till experience shall have clear'd the path of life, pleasure may be apt to spread some snares in your way that may cost you sorrow to escape from.

JACK.

Humph ! in all twenty and five guineas—What was you saying last, brother ?

CHARLES.

Only throwing away a little good advice upon you, Jack ; that's all.

JACK.

I thank you ; I have a pretty considerable stock of that upon my hands already ; one good thing at a time. (*Looking at the money.*) How much of this money must you take back again ?

CHARLES.

'Tis all at your service ; and more if your occasions require it.

JACK.

THE CHOLERIC MAN.

JACK.

Are you serious? Is it possible? 'Sbud! I don't know, I can't tell what I should do in your case, but I'm afraid I cou'd never have the heart to give you as much. Drown it! what pity 'tis that old Crusty hadn't some of your spirit. May I spend it all, and won't you require an account of it?

CHARLES.

Not unless you chuse to give it me.

JACK.

Give me a kiss, give me a kiss, my dear, dear brother! enjoy your good fortune and welcome. I perceive a man hasn't half so much envy in his heart, when his pocket's full of money. Come; I'll go change my dress. *[Exit.]*

ACT II.

SCENE I. Stapleton's House.

(STAPLETON enters to his wife and LÆTITIA, who are discovered at breakfast.)

STAPLETON.

A Merchant's wife, and not breakfasted before ten! fye upon you, Dolly; these are new fashions, these are courtly customs; let us stick to the city, and the old city hours. And this idle jade, Lætitia, loves her pillow better than she does her prayers! Come, come, away with your crockery: Old Andrew Nightshade will be with you before you are aware.

Mrs. STAPLETON.

There is another room ready for his reception. I am afraid my dear husband will find this old man's peevish-

THE CHOLERIC MAN.

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peevishness more than even his good nature can put up with.

STAPLETON.

Why hav'n't you kept my patience then in better exercise? but never fear. Lætitia you are to have a visit from Counsellor Manlove this morning: Have you perused the papers he sent you?

LÆTITIA.

I have.

STAPLETON.

And what do they tell you?

LÆTITIA.

What I can truly testify, that Mr. Stapleton has been the best of guardians.

STAPLETON.

I say the best! half the trading world wou'd call me a very bad one; when you come to sum up the accounts of your education, Hussy, I expect you will file a bill against me for waste and embezzlement.

LÆTITIA.

For misapplication perhaps; the only objectionable part of your accounts will be the subject of them.

Mrs. STAPLETON.

For shame, Lætitia Fairfax; you well know you've been the pride and pleasure of our lives.

STAPLETON.

When she was my ward, she dare not make so free with herself; now she is her own mistress, she must do as she will: My authority is expired.

LÆTITIA.

Rather reviv'd in so much fuller force, by how much more I'm bound to you by love, than law.

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT.

Mr. Nightshade is below, Sir; Counsellor Manlove to wait upon Miss Fairfax.

LÆTITIA.

Where have you shewn him?

D

SER.

SERVANT.

He is in the drawing-room.

LÆTITIA.

I'll wait on him directly.

[Exit Ser.]

STAPLETON.

A word before we part. Mr. Manlove will inform you of certain restrictions you are under, by your good father's will, in the article of marriage: If the subject shou'd lead him, as possibly it may, to name his nephew Charles to you; in truth, my dear Lætitia, I do not know, in all this town, a young man of whom report speaks so advantageously.

LÆTITIA.

Mr. Manlove's business with me is of a very different sort.

STAPLETON.

Perhaps not; therefore remember what I say.

LÆTITIA.

I never can forget the respect that is due to your opinion.

[Exit.]

Mrs. STAPLETON.

Have you any reason to think Mr. Manlove means to propose for his nephew?

STAPLETON.

I'll tell you more of that hereafter; we must now welcome old Nightshade with as good a grace as we can: He is an honest man, tho' a humoursome one, and was for many years a very steady correspondent of mine at Rotterdam. We merchants must not overlook our friends, whatever our betters may think fit to do.

[Exit.]

SCENE II. Charles Manlove's House.

JACK NIGHTSHADE *enters, finely apparell'd, in a suit of his brother's, followed by DIBBLE.*

JACK.

Come along, Dibble, come along—Dear, lovely and delicious lady fortune, who hast put clothes upon my

THE CHOLERIC MAN.

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my back, and cash into my pocket! thou know'st I never slander'd thee, never call'd thee jilt or gypsy, when I've seen thee perch'd upon thy wheel, and feeding fools by handfuls; give me now the rest of thy blessings, love, pleasure, and good fellowship! May the lads I am to meet be frolicksome, and the lasses free! and never let my poor little defenceless wherry come athwart that old Dutch dogger, my father, till it's safe in harbour, and all hands ashore.

DIBBLE.

Well said, Squire, where in the name of wonder did you find this rhapsody?

JACK.

Why, did you never see the picture of fortune, mounted on a wheel with a bandage over her eyes, tossing money to the mob, like a parliament man? Gregory has the print in his pantry, you may buy the whole moral for a penny.

DIBBLE.

I protest, Jack, you are not only grown a beau in your brother's fine clothes, but a wit into the bargain.

JACK.

Pshaw! I am merry enough when my belly's full, and father asleep; but what signifies a poor fellow's being witty, when there's nobody to laugh at his jokes? 'Tis the money in my pocket, Dibble, not the clothes on my back, makes me a wit; and when the wine mounts into my noddle, I shall be wittier still.

DIBBLE.

Time will shew; but hark'ee, Squire Jack, before you pass yourself off for a man of fashion, thou'dn't you practice the carriage and conceits of one?

JACK.

I shall be glad to learn.

DIBBLE.

Be ruled by me; I will give you a few lessons shall set you up for a fine gentleman in a minute.

Look at me—that's well. Stare me full in the face—
Ay, that will do—you've impudence enough for the
character, that's a main point gain'd—now walk
across the room.

JACK.

Walk! why that's easy enough I hope.

DIBBLE.

Hold, not so fast; there you are out—walk trip-
pingly thus, dy'e see, with a lazy loitering air, not
a league at a stride, with your head playing like the
pole of a coach, so (*mimicking*.) When you enter a
room, take no notice of any body in it; make your
way strait to the chimney; turn your back to the fire,
pull away the flaps of your clothes, and display your
person to the ladies who are sitting round it; when
their teeth begin to chatter with the cold, throw your-
self carelessly into a chair; tuck your hands into your
muff, and never open your lips for the rest of the
afternoon---'twill gain respect in every house you enter.

JACK.

Well, well, Dibble, this is all easy enough: I shall
be most at a loss for the lingo—what wou'd your
worship have me say when I'm amongst my betters?

DIBBLE.

Nothing, I tell you.

JACK.

Nothing! how the duce then shall I shew my wit?

DIBBLE.

By holding your tongue; never speak yourself, nor
smile at any thing spoken by another; reserve your
wit for your creditors, they'll keep it in exercise;
not but what there are other occasions for a man of
fashion to shew his parts; as for instance, with a
woman of modesty you may be witty at the expence
of her blushes, or with a parson at the expence of his
profession; these are cheap methods, be at no pains in
the account, decency and religion will pay all costs,
and you'll be clear of the courts.

JACK.

JACK.

You need not tell me that; why I've play'd a thousand tricks upon our vicar, and as for modest women as you call 'em, I don't know much of them; but I know my tongue runs fast enough when I'm amongst the maids, I can set the whole kitchen in a roar. But come, let's sally: Now do you mind, Dibble, don't you be calling me 'Squire, and 'Squire Jack, and Jack Nightshade; but let it be Sir, and your honour, and all that.

DIBBLE.

Trust to me for setting you off in those fine clothes—let me see—what shall I say you are?

JACK.

Say I'm a young West Indian just come to my canes.

DIBBLE.

Ay, or a young nobleman just succeeded to your honours—'twill account for your want of education.

JACK.

No, hang it, a better thought strikes me—call me Mr. Manlove.

DIBBLE.

Mr. Manlove! why do you take your brother's name?

JACK.

For the same reason I take his clothes—because it fits me: If I leave him the estate that came with it, why mayn't I change names as well as he?

DIBBLE.

Because he chang'd by act of parliament, and you by act of your own.

JACK.

Act of parliament! egad they'll change people's sexes by-and-by; why they'll turn a wife into a maid by act of parliament as readily as a common into an enclosure.

DIB-

THE CHOLERIC MAN.

DIBBLE.

Yes, but it generally remains common for the life of the proprietor.

JACK.

Nan!—How must I carry my hat, Dibble? thus, under my arm? This damn'd barber has thrust his black skewers thro' my ears.—Look out and tell me if the man has call'd a coach.

DIBBLE.

'Tis waiting, Sir.

JACK.

A plague upon this spout 'tis as heavy as a fowling pouch, and jingles like a pair of dog-couples; an oak-stick is worth two of it. Have you caution'd the servants about my name?

DIBBLE.

'Tis done, your honour.

JACK.

'Tis done, your honour—your honour is obeyed: Come along, Dibble, let honour go before, and law follow after.

DIBBLE.

Ay, but when law is at your heels, have a care it does not overtake you.

[Exit.]

SCENE III.

Enter MANLOVE, and CHARLES.

MANLOVE.

Her mother was a Sedley, of a respectable family, and an accomplish'd lady; her father was a trader of fair character and principal in the house now conducted with such credit by her guardian Stapleton; her fortune is considerable; I mention that to you, as I think any great disproportion on either side in that particular is to be avoided.

CHARLES.

CHARLES.

Equal alliances to be sure are best.

MAN LOVE.

And this would be of all most equal, for I verily think you have not a virtue, of which Miss Fairfax does not possess the counterpart: By the way, Charles, you will not like her the worse for being no inconsiderable proficient in your favourite art, painting.

CHARLES.

I have heard her performance very highly commended: Your report makes me ambitious of being known to her; and so, my dear Sir, I promise you, in the words of your favourite poet,

I'll look to like, if looking liking move.

I'll take my heart to counsel, for I know you ask no sacrifice.

MAN LOVE.

No, Charles, 'twas to make you free, not to rob you of your freedom, that I gave you a fortune; if I throw your inclination into fetters, 'twill be poor satisfaction that I gild them over afterwards,

CHARLES.

In that assurance I will proceed in this affair after my own humour; for as I wish to have an opportunity of seeing this fair paintress in her natural colours, I must devise some method of conversing with her at my ease.

MAN LOVE.

At your ease? what prevents you?

CHARLES.

The declaration you made to her this morning; I dread the artificial graces which young women are too apt to put on, when they act under observation; so quiet, so chaste'd, so infinitely obliging: We think 'em meek as lambs; marry 'em; and they change to mountain-cats. Such women remind me of decay'd ships newly painted; the outside is inviting; embark, and they conduct you to your grave.

MAN.

THE CHOLERIC MAN.

MAN LOVE.

Well, Charles, if you embark your hopes upon this venture, I think I may ensure your happiness, though the voyage is for life.

CHARLES.

Where can I find a better policy? However, if I could meet her without her knowing me—in the way of her art now, can you tell me, is she visited by our best masters?

MAN LOVE.

By all, foreigners as well as natives; there is no fame without her approbation; not a grace is stamp'd without her fiat.

CHARLES.

Under favour, are not these extraordinary accomplishments to acquire in the family of a trader?

MAN LOVE.

Not at all; beware how you apply French ideas to English merchants: Where nature bestows genius, education will give accomplishments; but where the disposition is wanting, the blood of a Duchess cannot make a gentlewoman.

CHARLES.

Was she ever out of England?

MAN LOVE.

I have been told she was near two years in Italy with a family of distinction.

CHARLES.

It is enough; I have my cue: I think I shall fall upon a method of introducing myself to her acquaintance without a discovery. I can pass examination in the art of painting very tolerably.

MAN LOVE.

Take your own course; I have no right to advise; I am poor authority in affairs of love. Good afternoon to you. Nay, Charles, no ceremony; I thought we had agreed on that. Your servant. *[Exit.]*

CHARLES.

Your most obedient—Here, who waits?

Enter

Enter FREDERICK.

Frederick, look out my travelling frock, you know which I mean.

FREDERICK.

The suit you had made at Lyons.

CHARLES.

No, 'twas at Milan: The green camblet: Bring it to me in the dressing-room. Make haste.

[Exeunt severally.]

SCENE IV.

NIGHTSHADE, *followed by* FRAMPTON.

NIGHTSHADE.

Come along, Mr. What's-your-name: Enter without more ceremony I beseech you—An old formal blockhead!

FRAMPTON.

I attend you, Sir, by order of Mr. Manlove, touching a case wherein you have consulted him.

NIGHTSHADE.

That's true, that's true; it is the pigeon-house case—I gave it him this morning: Is it usual for you lawyers to be so nimble with your answers?

FRAMPTON.

It is not unusual with Mr. Manlove.

NIGHTSHADE.

Well, and what thinks he of the case?

FRAMPTON.

The case is a clear case.

NIGHTSHADE.

I am glad to hear it heartily.

FRAMPTON.

In other words, it is a case clear to be apprehended: It hath reference to a pigeon-house, built and erected in a certain field, commonly known by the name of the Vicar's Homestead. *Quere: Standerth not the said pigeon-house within the manorial rights of Calves-Town, and in that case, may not you, Andrew Night-*

E

shade,

shade, Esq. lord of said manor, remove, or cause to be remov'd, said vicar's pigeon-house.

NIGHTSHADE.

Pull down, erase, destroy, and level with the ground; those are my words. Now give me the opinion.

FRAMPTON.

He has given no opinion.

NIGHTSHADE.

No opinion! what the plague is this your errand? Am I to be made a fool of?

FRAMPTON.

To his clients Mr. Manlove gives opinions, to his friends advice. He wishes you to let the pigeon-house stand where it does.

NIGHTSHADE.

A fig for what he wishes.

FRAMPTON.

However, if you're so determin'd, he does not deny but you may pull it down.

NIGHTSHADE.

Why that's enough. Then down it goes! I'll sow the land with salt.

FRAMPTON.

Nevertheless, he wills me to tell you, that this must be done *tuo periculo*, as the saying is; for if your conscience does not prevent you from pulling it down, the law will make you build it up again.

NIGHTSHADE.

The law has made a fool of you, methinks: Why, what the deuce do you blow hot and cold in the same breath? Is this the way you treat your clients? Am I to be fobb'd off thus by an old methodical piece of clock-work, by a stiff starcht limb of the law, a cutter of goose quills, and a scraper of parchments? No: Evacuate my chamber. Tell your principal I'll none of his advice; I value his opinion not a rush: Shall I be taught and tutor'd at these years?

I'm

THE CHOLERIC MAN. (27)

I'm sure I am an older man, and I believe a wiser than himself—so tell him, Master Frampton.

FRAMPTON.

Have you no other commands for me than these?

NIGHTSHADE.

Pooh!

FRAMPTON.

I am your obedient—Good evening to your honour.

[Exit.

NIGHTSHADE.

Now why the devil won't that fellow be in a passion? he'll no more be put out of his temper, than a German postillion will out of his pace—So, Gregory! what news? have you found out the attorney?

SCENE V.

Enter GREGORY.

GREGORY.

Your honour shall hear the whole proceeding: At Thavies-Inn I first got scent of him, threw off, and took the drag as far as Shoe-Lane; there he hung cover; I had a warm burst to the Fleet; hunted him thro' Turn-again-Lane to the Old-Bailey; got an entapis, and run into him in Labour-in-vain-Court, Old Fish-Street-Hill—

NIGHTSHADE.

Well, and what says he to the prosecution?

GREGORY.

For some time he said nothing; for when I first arrived he was on a visit to a friend under sentence of death in Newgate: however, after a while he came home, and then—

NIGHTSHADE.

What said he then? to the point, Duncce.

GREGORY.

Why he said, an please your honour, he wou'd have nothing to do with the business: There's no credit to be got by such prosecutions; if it had been

on

on a criminal indictment indeed—but he won't be concern'd in any vexatious suit about game; humanity won't suffer him.

NIGHTSHADE.

Humanity indeed! was ever the like heard? But, Sirrah, this is all a lie of your own inventing, and your bones shall answer for it. *(Threatening to cane him.)*

SCENE VI.

STAPLETON, and NIGHTSHADE.

STAPLETON.

Keep the peace, in the King's name! what's the matter now, friend Andrew?

NIGHTSHADE.

Why this sot would fain have me believe that a Newgate solicitor will refuse a suit upon motives of humanity: A likely tale indeed! He comes home from the society of a condemn'd malefactor, and scruples levying the penalty against a poaching parson. What would the noblemen and gentlemen, associated for the preservation of our game, say to that?

STAPLETON.

Who cares what they would say! What have men of business to do with such disputes?

NIGHTSHADE.

Men of business! I have no business: I left off trade, thank heaven, in time: You'll stay till it has left off you.

STAPLETON.

Why so? Our warehouses are as full, our commissions as many, our credit as good as ever: What do you see about us makes you prophecy so ill?

NIGHTSHADE.

I tell you, Sir, your trade is ebbing fast away from you in every quarter of the globe. Look out and satisfy yourself; but I have done, 'tis no concern of mine—What are your treaties with the Portuguese
waste

THE CHOLERIC MAN.

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waste paper; linings for old trunks to carry home the refuse goods, that they return upon your hands. Another man would flatter you; but I'm your friend; I let you know these things in time.

STAPLETON.

A most considerate precaution, truly.

NIGHTSHADE.

I have now no leisure for conversations of this nature, but I would ask a thinking man, what must be the fate of your Turkey trade? Undone. You've burnt their ships it seems, now you may burn your own; you'll have no further call for them, unless you send them to your colonies, to air your goods and exercise your sailors—but I've something else to think of—Gregory, my hat! I'm staying here too long. Your servant, Mr. Stapleton—remember I have told you now, I've let you know your danger—

STAPLETON.

And in the tenderest manner; you are the kindest friend: If we are ruin'd, you'll have nothing to regret—Your servant—we shall meet again at supper—

NIGHTSHADE.

I just step back to tell you that your weavers are all rising: I fell in with a large party of them in the streets: Your people migrating by thousands: What! men must not starve.—I hint this to you gently, and in pure good will; I have no interest to serve—and so your servant for an hour or two—I'll tell you more when I return—Oh, if I was a man to turn the gloomy side of things upon you, I could draw a melancholly picture truly! [Exit]

STAPLETON.

The man who tells me a distasteful lye, in some sort may be said to recommend the truth; but he who, like old Nightshade, makes the truth offensive, recommends a lye. [Exit]

SCENE

SCENE VII.

LÆTITIA, and LUCY.

LÆTITIA.

Lucy, come hither—you have a brother, I think, who is one of Counsellor Manlove's clerks.

LUCY.

I have, madam; and tho' I say it, as promising, genteel, well-spoken a young man as you would wish to set your eyes on; he is my only brother, ma'am.

LÆTITIA.

Let that be an excuse for your forwardness. I am not enquiring into his character.

LUCY.

If you did, ma'am, I assure you it will stand the strictest enquiry; my papa gave both of us an education—

LÆTITIA.

Your papa! let it be father in your mouth, if I might advise you.

LUCY.

Humph!—There's a person wants to speak with you.

LÆTITIA.

What person?

LUCY.

A person from abroad; a painting man, I believe; he says he has a recommendation to you—there are many such call here.

LÆTITIA.

If he has any letter of recommendation, desire he will be pleased to send it in. (*Exit Lucy.*) I cannot reconcile myself to this methodical course of proceeding; in the name of all that's happy, let our inclinations get the start of our proposals: If I could meet this Mr. Manlove naturally, and without form; if we
were

THE CHOLERIC MAN.

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were then to single out each other by the guidance of no other monitor than the heart, and if a thousand ifs besides were all to prove realities, a happy alliance might succeed; but to be turn'd into a room to undergo the proffest survey of a man, who comes upon a visit of liking, is insupportably humiliating. It may well be said of some fathers, that they drive a smith-field bargain for their daughters, when with butcher-like insensibility they shew 'em out for sale like cattle in a market.

(Lucy returns.)

LUCY.

The gentleman presents his respects to you, and desires you to peruse this letter; I think he is altogether as personable a young man as I would wish to see.

(Gives the letter.)

LÆTITIA.

Sure you forget yourself—let me see—from Counsellor Manlove!—what is this?

Madam,

The bearer of this letter, is a young man in whose prosperity I am warmly interested. He is lately return'd from Italy, where he has made some proficiency in the art of which you are a mistress; and as I flatter myself you will find him not unworthy, I beg leave to recommend him to your protection and esteem. When my nephew has the honour of being known to you, he can give you fuller satisfaction in this young man's particular than I can; in the mean time I venture to add, that Mr. Manlove will consider every favour you bestow, in this instance, as conferr'd upon himself. I have the honour to be, Madam,

Your most obedient, and most humble Servant,

CHARLES MANLOVE, Sen.

Where is the gentleman? introduce him directly.

(Lucy goes out, and brings in CHARLES.)

Your humble servant, Sir: You are the gentleman referr'd to in this letter——

CHARLES.

THE CHOLERIC MAN

CHARLES.

I am the person, Madam. What a lovely young woman!

LÆTITIA.

You are lately from Italy: Where did you principally pursue your studies?

CHARLES.

At Rome: I visited Florence, Bologna, Venice and other places; but I regard Rome as the grand repository of the antique, and for that reason I made my principal residence there.

LÆTITIA.

To what branch of the art did you chiefly direct your attention?

CHARLES.

To the study of beauty, Madam; and that in its simplest forms: A Laocoon, a Hercules, or a Caracalla may astonish; but it is a Faustina, a Venus, an Apollo that delights, that ravishes—But I am speaking to you on a subject of which you are both by art a mistress, and an example by nature.

LÆTITIA.

Upon my word! (*aside.*) Come, Sir, we are here in the way of the family: allow me to shew you into another apartment. (*She stops.*) Was young Mr. Manlove at Rome when you was?

CHARLES.

He was.

LÆTITIA.

I understand he has a very great regard for you.

CHARLES.

I hope I shall not forfeit his good opinion.

LÆTITIA.

It does you much honour: All the world speaks highly of Mr. Manlove. I'll shew you the way.

CHARLES.

Charming girl! I am in love with her at first sight.

[Exit.]

LUCY.

LUCY.

So, so! a very promising beginning. As sure as can be there's something in the wind about this Manlove! I suspect the letter to be a fetch; and as for this painter, I am mistaken, if he is not some how or other in the secret—'tis a mighty pretty fellow.—Ah, brother Dibble, I am glad to see you. How goes the world with you?

SCENE VIII.

LUCY, —and DIBBLE.

DIBBLE.

Busily, my girl, busily. I have borrowed a moment's time from company to run to you: I have luckily found you alone: Utter not a word; be all attention: Jack Nightshade, the country boy I made acquaintance with last year, is now in town; but not a word of that—He is at a tavern hard by, with some lads of mettle, who push about the glafs. What say you, Hussy, to a bold stroke for a husband?

LUCY.

For a husband! You are joking!

DIBBLE.

Serious, upon my honour! Oh, when the blood begins to boil, and the brain begins to turn, every thing may be attempted. He has signified to me that he is in want of a wife; you, I suppose, have no objection to a husband; so far you are both of a mind. He says the lady must be rich; the condition is a reasonable one; and you must provide a fortune for the purpose: What say you to your mistress's? He visits you in the name of Mr. Manlove; why may not you receive him in that of Miss Fairfax?

LUCY.

Impossible! Don't you know his father lodges in this very house?

F

DIE.

DIBBLE.

Scare boys with bug-bears: I have provided against danger; and with a promise of a good round sum, upon the wedding night, have made old Gregory my own: He will aid our project, and keep watch upon old Surly-boots, I warrant you.

LUCY.

But what is gain'd, if we shou'd compass our ends? the young man is a minor, and his father wou'd disinherit him.

DIBBLE.

Fear nothing—he's of age—Gregory confirms it: And as for his father's disinheriting him, I'll tell you a secret; it is not in his power: When the Counsellor settled an estate on Charles, old Nightshade cut him off with a shilling, and gave his fortune to Jack: I drew the deed myself; it is as tight as law can tie it.

LUCY.

I don't know what to say; a settlement to be sure is something; Mrs. Nightshade and an equipage, is better than plain Lucy and a pair of pattens: But then my heart misgives me—and the boy, they say, is such a cub——

DIBBLE.

Fine airs, in truth! Nay, if you are so exceptionous, please yourself; it's no affair of mine, I've done with it.

LUCY.

Hold, hold; you are so touchy, if one speaks—My madam will be monstrous angry, but no matter. Yesterday was married John Nightshade, Esq. to Miss——O, Gemini, 'twill make a flaming dash!

DIBBLE.

Ay, ay, leave me to draw the marriage deed; I'll jointure you I warrant. Come, decide; time's precious, and the moment serves: Old Nightshade's out; the ladies too, I understand, are on the wing—When shall we come?

LUCY.

LUCY.

When? I don't know—I vow I'm half afraid—Is there no law against me, if I am caught, and the scheme fails?

DIBBLE.

Pshaw! you are so irresolute; ev'n be a servant-maid all days of your life; I care not.

LUCY.

No, brother; I've as much ambition as my betters, so here's my hand—I'm with you—give me half an hour's time to con my lesson and I'll be ready for you.

DIBBLE.

That's my brave girl! Courage! the day's our own. If every thing's in train, and the coast clear, let Gregory meet us at the corner of the street, exactly in half an hour's time. But, hark'ee, Lucy; Jack is incog, and takes his brother Manlove's name, remember that: By the way, I suspect something's in the wind between your Madam and Mr. Charles.

LUCY.

Why so?

DIBBLE.

Because I saw him turn into her room just now, in an undress; he pass'd me on the stairs, and whisper'd me in the ear, not to open my lips concerning his being here to a single soul, for my life; therefore make no mischief—Farewel, I must be gone. [Exit.

LUCY.

Your humble servant, virtuous Miss Lætitia Fairfax; your painter then, as I suspected, turns out a lover in disguise; and you, it seems, have your intrigues as well as other folks. Who wou'd be nice about character in these times, when all the world conspires to put virtue out of countenance, and keep vice in?

A C T III.

SCENE I. *A Room in Stapleton's House.*

NIGHTSHADE, and STAPLETON.

NIGHTSHADE.

AND so you'll positively ship those bales of Norwich Crape for Holland?

STAPLETON.

I purpose so to do.

NIGHTSHADE.

You purpose so to do! and the Kersies and Callimancoes and Perpetuanoes too I warrant.

STAPLETON.

I do.

NIGHTSHADE.

The devil you do! I tell you what then, Master Stapleton, they will not have their name for nothing; you'll find them Perpetuanoes on your hands; I'd send tea to America as soon. Why sure I understand the Dutch markets; sure I think I do; you've found I understood them.

STAPLETON.

But times are altered, brother Andrew.

NIGHTSHADE.

With the devil to 'em. Times are alter'd truly, and trade is alter'd, and merchants are alter'd and grown obstinate blockheads, deaf to good counsel, ignorant of their business; a frivolous, gossiping, pleasure hunting crew; forsaking their counters for their country-houses, Change for Change-alley.—What sort of a season at Newfoundland? have you ship'd your fish yet for the Mediteranian-markets?

But

But what is it all to me? I have wound up my bottom; 'Twas a noble hit, Master Stapleton, that speculation of mine in saltpetre.

STAPLETON.

I believe it turn'd to tolerable account.

NIGHTSHADE.

I believe it did; I may venture to assure you it did, to tolerable account, as you say, tho' you predicted otherwise; it made my pillow for me; yes, yes, thank heaven, I'm easy; I've laid down my cares.

STAPLETON.

And taken up content. What a happy fellow are you, friend Andrew!

NIGHTSHADE.

But I tell you you're mistaken, I am not a happy fellow; I would not be thought happy; the world's too wicked for an honest man to be happy or contented in it.

STAPLETON.

But you are out of the world; you are settled in a peaceful retreat, in rural tranquillity, cultivating your own acres, enjoying your own produce.

NIGHTSHADE.

Blood and fire, I tell you other people are enjoying my produce; my servants are embezzeling my property, my neighbours are destroying my game, the vermin are laying waste my granaries, and the rot is making havock with my sheep; and how the vengeance then can I be happy?

STAPLETON.

By bearing every thing with a patient mind.

NIGHTSHADE.

Patient! I am patient to a fault.

STAPLETON.

By reflecting, when your servants or neighbours molest you, what an exemplary young man you are blest with for a son.

NIGHT-

THE CHOLERIC MAN.

NIGHTSHADE. Yes, yes, the boy's as good as his neighbours.

STAPLETON.

I never heard so universal a good character.

NIGHTSHADE.

'Tis a sober, frugal lad, that's the truth on't.

STAPLETON.

So accomplish'd a genius, so distinguish'd a taste for the fine arts.

NIGHTSHADE.

For the fine arts! that's rather too much, I know no art Jack has but setting trimmers, worming puppies, and making fowling nets. (*aside.*)

STAPLETON.

Your son, friend Addrew, is not like the present frippery race of young men; he is a man of sound principle and good morals; no libertine, no free-thinker, no gamester.

NIGHTSHADE.

Gamester indeed! I'd game him, with the devil to him.

STAPLETON.

He has more elegant resources: The woman must be happy who can engage his affections.

NIGHTSHADE.

I wish your ward Miss Fairfax was of your opinion.

STAPLETON.

Are you sincere?

NIGHTSHADE.

Why to be sure I am. Don't I know she'll have a very considerable fortune?

STAPLETON.

A fig for her fortune—here's my hand—so the young folks can like each other, and Mr. Manlove is consenting—

NIGHT.

NIGHTSHADE.

Who? who is consenting? Mr. Manlove?

STAPLETON.

Ay surely; I'm afraid we do not rightly understand each other: Which of your sons are you speaking of?

NIGHTSHADE.

Which of my sons am I speaking of! the only one I ever do speak of; the only one which I acknowledge, Jack. You cou'dn't think me such a fool to recommend that puppy pig-tail'd ape, with his essences and pulvillies; that monkey, whom my silly brother sent to see the world, with his grand tour, and his pictures, and his impertinencies? No—I tell you once for all, I've done with him; he has dropt my name and I my nature; let him that christen'd him anew, keep him; I have done with him.

STAPLETON.

You shock me to hear you say so.

NIGHTSHADE.

What, shan't I speak of my own son as I think fit?

STAPLETON.

Yes, if you speak as a father shou'd.

NIGHTSHADE.

And who's the judge of that? Have you a son? Are you a father? No, you are a guardian: Heaven help the poor young woman that's your ward. Marry her to Charles Manlove! marry her to her garters sooner, and tye her up upon the curtain rod, 'twere a better deed. And what know you of the fine arts? Are you a painter as well as your ward here? I see no tokens of it; the London Prentice, and the March to Finchley, seem to be the sum total of your collection—His taste, it seems, has captivated you; his taste for what? for Camblets, for Cazoys, for Manchester and Norwich commodities? There lies your learning; those are your universities.

STAPLE-

THE CHOLERIC MAN.

STAPLETON.

Andrew Nightshade, Andrew Nightshade, recollect yourself : We'll converse when you are cool : I talk to no man in a passion.

NIGHTSHADE.

I in a passion ? 'Tis the first time I was ever told so, and shall be the last, from you at least—Here, Gregory, where are you : —I'll be gone this instant ; I'll have my things pack'd up ; I'll rid your house, at least, of one passionate man. I in a passion ? I that never lost my temper—But your servant, Sir ; your servant, Mr. Stapleton : Perhaps you'll say I'm in a passion now. Here, Gregory ! why Gregory !

[Exit.

STAPLETON (*alone.*)

Ha, ha, ha ! of a certain, Andrew, thou'rt a ridiculous old fellow. If I had an acquaintance with the poets, I would get them to exhibit thy humours on the stage ; 'twould be a diverting scene, and no bad moral.

Enter Mrs. STAPLETON and LÆTITIA.

Mrs. STAPLETON.

Here's a fine storm ; he's calling for his servants to pack up his things ; he vows he'll quit the house immediately.

LÆTITIA.

A happy resolution. What a snapdragon it is ! No Yorkshire housewife in her washing-week can be more peevish.

Mrs. STAPLETON.

I wish he was out of the house ; I cannot bear to have your peace annoy'd.

STAPLETON.

My peace ! You have had a visitor, Lætitia,

LÆTITIA.

A brother artist, and a friend of Mr. Manlove's. I declare I've lost my heart to him.

STAPLETON.

THE CHOLERIC MAN.

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STAPLETON.

Then I deny that he's a friend of Mr. Manlove's.

LÆTITIA.

Oh, Sir, he is the prettiest man! so candid, so intelligent; full of his art, and glowing warm with all that taste for the antique, which true genius is sure to gain by travel.

STAPLETON.

Ay, ay, I understand you; he's been prailing your performances.

LÆTITIA.

I own it; but what flatters me above all; he commends your portrait exceedingly; I shall proceed in it with twice the spirit I began.

Mrs. STAPLETON.

He has turned her head with flattery; the grace of Raphaël, the design of Michael Angelo, Titian's warmth, and Corregio's beauty; centre all in her unrivalld compositions!

STAPLETON.

Hey-day! where learnt you all this gabble? here's a pack of names for a citizen's wife to get by heart.

Mrs. STAPLETON.

Do you think I've clean'd her pallet then for nothing? The doctor's Merry-andrew knows the names of his drugs, or he's not fit for his place. We are going this instant upon a visit of virtue to Mr. Manlove's: This young painter speaks in raptures of his collection: He has some pictures, which are said to be inimitable.

LÆTITIA.

Dear Sir, I hope you've no objection. He has talk'd to me so much of a Lucretia by Guido, that I am dying to visit her.

STAPLETON.

I shou'd doubt if Lucretia wou'd do as much for you. I hardly think this visit is in rule.

G

LÆTITIA.

THE CHOLERIC MAN

LÆTITIA.

It is done every day; half the town has been there: I go there as a student—besides, Mrs. Stapleton goes with me.

STAPLETON.

Well, well, I am no critic in these matters, entertain yourselves and you have my free leave. Much pleasure to you both—your servant. *[Exit.]*

LÆTITIA.

Come, my dear madam, the light still serves us; let us lose no time. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE II. *The Painting Room.**Enter* L U C Y.

LUCY.

Now the duce fetch this madcap brother of mine, what a twitter has he thrown me into! I can settle to nothing: Madam and her sham-painter have made a fine disorder in this room. I don't know any use these geniuses are of, but to put every thing out of its place. Ah! is it you?

Enter D I B B L E

DIBBLE.

Hush, hush! compose yourself; you had like to have ruin'd all: Why didn't you send Gregory to the street's end, as you agreed?

LUCY.

Lud, I'm in such a flutter—I don't know, I'm frightened. Is he here?

D I B B L E.

Ready: Prim'd high with brisk Champagne: The train'd is laid; you have the fire; touch it, and off it goes.

LUCY.

Fire! I've no fire about me. Did the servants see you?

D I B.

D I B B L E.

No; Gregory let us in, and has the young 'Squire now in keeping: There never was so fortunate a moment. Hark! he's at the door.

JACK. (*from without*)

Hift! Lawyer—Pickle—Bully-Jack!—shall I come in?

D I B B L E.

He must come in; slip out a moment 'till I prepare him, and then—Remember, Lucy, he is Mr. Manlove here, and yourself Lætitia. Go your ways. (*Exit Lucy.*) Now, my lad of glory, I shall show you a phenomenon, a star of the first water.

Enter JACK.

JACK.

Water! I scorn it: Give me wine: There's honesty in that, and wit and love. I'm monstrously in love—but where's the lady?

D I B B L E.

Oh, she's at hand, and half your own already. I've been preaching to her—Miss, says I—

JACK.

Rot your *says I!* who cares for what you say: Show me the girl: I want no lawyer in this case; Champagne's my counsellor. You are a blockhead, Dibble, and a flincher: I'm for all the game; fee'd on both sides, boy; a bottle in my right hand, and a bottle in my left; double-charge'd, at heart and head; one for courage and t'other for invention. Pooh! my brother's a fool to me; his coat was never in such company before. Where is the lady, I say? I must see the lady.

D I B B L E.

Well, well, be patient; you shall see the lady. [*Exit.*]

JACK.

Ay, this puts every thing in motion: Now the world goes round: It has found its legs at last, and dances

like Plough-Monday. Drown it, 'twas asleep before.
 What's all this lumber for (*stumbling over the Easel*)
 The devil! who are you? (*speaking to the Layman*)
 what's your profession? An easy, slender, dangling
 figure, and as much of a gentleman as most you shall
 meet.—The piggins! now I smoak the jest: She
 paints. Oh damn it! she's an artist—That won't do;
 there's no standing that; I must overturn all this
 trumpery: I shall soon tumble you out of the room,
 my dear—your reign's a short one, take my word.
 Ay, here she comes!

Enter DIBBLE with LUCY.

DIBBLE.

Mr. Manlove, this is Miss Fairfax. Miss, this is
 Mr. Manlove.

JACK.

Madam, behold the fondest of your slaves. My
 friend here Lawyer Dibble has inform'd you that my
 name is Manlove, and he tells me you are call'd Miss
 Fairfax. Be it so; if he tells a lie, he is not the first
 of his profession who has so done. If you should think
 that I am rather elevated and in the air, I won't deny it;
 Champagne, you know, is a searching liquor, and my
 scull is none of the deepest; but if you suppose that I
 am so blind as to overlook your beauties, or my own
 perfections, you are not the person I take you for.
 Dibble, come hither, make the Lady acquainted with
 some of my good qualities. Discuss.

LUCY.

Oh, Sir, what need? the good qualities of Mr.
 Manlove are in every body's mouth.

JACK.

Deuce take me now, if that is any flattery to me.

DIBBLE.

I told you, Madam, what a modest young gentle-
 man he was.

JACK.

JACK.

Oh, you're a precious devil. Be pleas'd to tell the Lady likewise what a brave estate I have got; such things come naturally from a lawyer's mouth; tell her what it is, and where it lies: Drown me, if I know where to find an acre of it.

LUCY.

Oh, never name estate when Mr. Manloye's in the case: Your person, air, address—

JACK.

Madam, you do me honour. 'Egad, I shall have no occasion for courtship. (*aside.*)

LUCY.

Your genius, taste, accomplishments—I myself have some small turn for painting—

JACK.

Yes, and I should like you as well without it. (*aside.*)

LUCY.

But you, I dare say, are a master-hand; and poetry, no doubt, is full as much your own.

JACK.

Faith, there's not much to choose between 'em.

LUCY.

But then your education—one may see that you have travell'd.

DIBBLE.

Oh, yes, that's very visible.

JACK.

Well said, lawyer—She has a damnable clack.

LUCY.

I should be delighted to hear an account of your travels: I dare say you have met many singular adventures.

JACK.

A thousand; but I have taken an oath never to speak of 'em.

LUCY.

LUCY.

Oh, you must conquer such scruples. What advantages has your uncle's bounty given you, Mr. Manlove, over that poor lad in the country!

JACK.

And yet I'd rather hear one kind word said of that poor lad in the country, than a whole volume of Mr. Manlove's praises. I'm hipp'd, whenever I hear the subject mentioned.

DIBBLE.

Make up to him, Luey, or he's lost. Jack Nightshade, what are you about? one bold attack, and he's your own.

JACK.

It may be so; but you must know I have a kind of partiality for that same country lubber, Jack Nightshade; and 'till I can find a Lady, who will prefer him to his brother, I will remain as I am; so there's an end of the matter, d'ye see, and no harm done. Madam, I'm your servant.

[Exit.]

LUCY.

So finishes the chapter of husbands. I thank you for your scheme.

DIBBLE.

Thank yourself for your folly. What possess you with the thought of touching upon the lad in the country? how could you be so suppliant?

LUCY.

What does it signify? He is too cunning to be caught with chaff; e'en drop your project.

DIBBLE.

No, let despair go hang. I am not easily repuls'd: Take courage, and commit yourself to me; I have resources yet you know not of. Come, Lucy, you shall see my genius rises on defeat.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III. *Manlove's House.*CHARLES. *(Alone.)*

It is time to take off the mask; I have seen and heard enough: She who can captivate both eyes and ears

ears

ears at once, is irresistible; Miss Fairfax is so compos'd, that she has beauty enough to blind our understandings, if she wanted wit; and wit enough to blind our eyes, if she wanted beauty. I will go to her in this habit once again, and solicit an interview for Mr. Manlove: If she readily grants it, I will avail myself of her compliance, and instantly disclose myself—if not—But what, in the name of wonder, have we got here: Ha, ha, ha! my Paris suit, by all that's brilliant; the very *chef d'œuvre* of the superlative Monf. Le Duc: That coat was made for grand occasions; it escorted me to the nuptials of the great Count d'Artois; it has now the honour to attend the revels of the illustrious Jack Nightshade.

Enter JACK.

JACK.

Ay, and had I been willing, it might have assisted at another wedding: 'Egad, it might have carried off a fine girl, and one of the first fortunes in the city.

CHARLES.

I should have thought your scenes had rather laid amongst the girls of freedom, than of fortune.

JACK.

This lady, Sir, had both. Swear to me you'll be secret, and I'll tell you where I've been.

CHARLES.

Nay, Jack, you'll trust me sure without an oath; you know I am no tell-tale. Where have you been?

JACK.

You'll scarce believe it; where on all this earth but to the very house, where old Surlyboots sets up his rest!

CHARLES.

To Mr. Stapleton's?

JACK.

To the enemies head quarters: A high stroke!

CHARLES.

And what carried you thither?

JACK.

JACK.

A girl: The wench I told you of.

CHARLES.

But what sort of a wench? I don't understand how any girl could carry you to Mr. Stapleton's.

JACK.

No! She'd have carried me any where; all the world over: She is ready to set out on her travels.

CHARLES.

And her name is—

JACK.

Fairfax.

CHARLES.

How!

JACK.

Lætitia Fairfax.

CHARLES.

What is it you have been doing? I am much interested in this lady's good opinion, and if you have done or said any thing to offend her—

JACK.

Offend her! Zooks, if you had heard how mere a country whelp she made of me, you wou'd own I had most reason to be offended of the two.

CHARLES.

Still I don't understand you; you tell your story so confusedly, I can make out nothing from it.

JACK.

Tell it yourself then, brother.

CHARLES.

But this precaution I must give you, Jack, not to go upon that ground again; keep your sallies within proper bounds, and direct them to proper objects. Miss Fairfax is a lady for whom I have the tenderest esteem; have a care therefore, young man, how you affront her as you value my resentment.

JACK.

Whuh!

Enter

THE CHOLERIC MAN.

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Enter FREDERICK.

FREDERICK.

Sir, Mr. Manlove requests your company at his chambers immediately.

CHARLES.

I attend him—Brother, I am serious—Hitherto I hope no mischief has been done; but I expect that you observe what I have told you, and be more prudent for the future. *[Exit.]*

JACK.

And be a prig like you—Oh, you shall smart for this; I'll curry your fine hide. Now would I give both ears from off this head, if I could make the girl but fairly jilt this puppy, and revenge myself upon him.

Enter DIBBLE.

DIBBLE.

Squire!

JACK.

Ah, Dibble, I have made myself a precious blockhead.

DIBBLE.

What, in the penitentials? Is the Champagne cloudy?

JACK.

Vexation sobers me like a wet napkin. Oh, if I cou'd see the girl again

DIBBLE.

Do you wish it?

JACK.

Wish it! I'd crawl to Scotland on my knees; nay more, I'd live there all my days, so I could bilk this elder brother with Miss Fairfax.

DIBBLE.

Say you so, Squire? This betters my best hopes. Follow me once more to Mr. Stapleton's: Take courage, and my life upon't the lady is your own.

JACK.

Have with you then; I'm ready; come along.

H

DIB-

N O T A B L E.

Hold, not so fast—the old lion may be in his den. Give me one quarter of an hour's law, and then if we miscarry, crop these ears and nail them up like vermin to your walls.

JACK.

Agreed! I take you at your word. (*Exit Dibble.*) Now, my fine brother, if I catch you on the hip I'll give your pride a fall; I'll shew you that a clown may have a courtier's cunning. Hey-day! who comes here?

Mrs. STAPLETON and LETITIA, *after a*
in by FREDERICK.

FREDERICK.

I beg pardon, Sir, I thought you was gone out; These ladies are desirous of seeing the pictures, and I was conducting them to the room.

JACK.

I will take that honour on myself. Go before and open the windows. (*Exit Fred.*) You are fond of paintings, ladies; I am glad it is in my power to entertain you.

Mrs. STAPLETON.

You are the owner, Sir, of this admirable collection. Your name is Manlove.

JACK.

At the service of the ladies always. I'll pass a few of lawyer Dibble's airs upon them—I'm in a rare cue.

(*aside.*)

LETITIA.

What do they mean by talking up this young man? He has a miserable address: I see very little of the man of fashion about him.

Mrs. STAPLETON.

I cannot say much for his person to be sure.

JACK.

She has fixt her eyes upon me; she is taken with my person and address—Don't you find it rather cold,
ladies?

adies?—I wish there was a fire in the room, that I might give her a taste of my breeding. *(Exit.)*

The public is much bound to you for giving them access to your collection.

If the public found no more amusement in them than I do, they might hang in the dark till doom's-day.

You jest, I believe: Is it possible, after taking such pains in procuring them, you can have no enjoyment in the possession of them?

Even so, Madam; they resemble matrimony in that respect; the pursuit is the pleasure. But come, ladies, the room is ready, and I'll shew you the way.—What the devil does that old Duenna come for?

(Goes out.)
Is this the accomplish'd Mr. Manlove? He seems in a strange humour: Are you sure he is perfectly sober? I declare I scarce like to follow him.

Ladies, this is the way: Indulge me with the honour of your hand. *(Leads out Lætitia.) [Exeunt.]*

SCENE III.
An Apartment magnificently furnished with pictures.

JACK introducing Mrs. STAPLETON and LÆTITIA.

JACK.
There, Ladies; there they hang: A jolly crew of 'em. Old Ladies in ruffs and furbelows up to their throats, and young ones without a rag to cover 'em. These painters are but scurvy taylors; they'll send a goddess into the world without a cloud to cover her: There are some pretty conceits go with their histories, but they will speak for themselves; I am but little in their secrets.

LÆTITIA. H 2 LÆTITIA.

THE CHOLERIC MAN.

LÆTITIA.
What a blaze of beauty! there's the *Tyrian Venus*; heavens! what a form! what brilliant hues! But look, dear Madam, here is grace and dignity; *Guido's Lucretia*: the dagger in her breast, and in the act of heroic self-destruction! What resolution! what a spirit has the great artist thrown into those eyes!

JACK.
Yes, she had a devil of a spirit: She stabb'd herself in a pique upon being cross'd in love.

Mrs. STAPLETON.
You presume on our ignorance; history, I believe, assigns more elevated motives for Lucretia's death.

JACK.
Very likely; there were great pains taken to smother the story; but 'tis as I tell you—I had it from a near relation of the family.

LÆTITIA.
Ridiculous! Do you observe that picture, Madam; 'tis a melancholly story, very finely told by Poussin: It is a view of *Marseilles* at the time of the plague, with a capital figure of the good bishop in the midst of the groupe.

JACK.
Bishop, Madam! that person which you look upon is a physician, and the people round about him are his patients; they are in a desperate way it must be confess'd. Do you see that angry figure in the corner; he is a gamester: he is picking lead out of loaded dice to run into bullets, to fire through his own head: 'Tis no bad moral.

LÆTITIA.
You are infinitely kind to favour us with these anecdotes: If you are thus gracious to all strangers, the world will edify abundantly. But we won't put you to the trouble of explanation—we are not entirely ignorant—tho' your collection may be the best we have seen, it is not absolutely the first.

JACK.
Belike then you are a painter, as well as the lady I visited just now.

LÆTITIA.

LÆTITIA.

In the presence of such masters as are here assembled, I cannot call myself a painter; in my own chamber I sometimes persuade myself I am.

JACK.

Yes, I am told it is an art which ladies mostly practise in their own chambers—What say you to that picture over the door? 'tis a merry conceit.

LÆTITIA.

It is the colouring of the Venetian school: I should guess it to be *Tintoret*.

JACK.

Oh, you are quite out of the story.

Mrs. STAPLETON.

She is speaking of the master: The story is plainly that of Actæon, and no bad moral; he was turn'd into a stag, by the goddess of chastity, for his impertinent curiosity.

JACK.

Excuse me, Madam, you mistake the moral—That gentleman with the antlers on his head, is a city husband, the principal lady in the show is his wife; she wears a crescent on her forehead to signify she is a dealer in horns; her companions are a groupe of city Madams! The painter drew them bathing to shew the warmth of their constitutions.

LÆTITIA.

Upon my word you have a great deal of wit, and you have a fine collection of paintings; but one capital piece is wanting.

JACK.

And what is that, pray?

LÆTITIA.

Modesty: It will be an excellent companion to your *Lucrèce*.

JACK.

But who shall I get to sit for the likeness?

LÆTITIA.

You will find it admirably painted by the same master. Come, Madam, it is time for us to be gone.

JACK.

THE CHOLERIC MAN.

JACK.

You are not for the city-end of the town, I conclude.

Mrs. STAPLETON.

Our home is in the city.

JACK.

Permit me to conduct you thither; I have a coach in waiting, and am bound to New Broad-Street, if you know such a place.

Mrs. STAPLETON.

Intimately; but we have a carriage of our own.

LÆTITIA.

Can there be any attractions in the city to engage Mr. Manlove's regards?

JACK.

Oh, yes; an assignation, Madam: I am loth to disappoint a fond girl.

LÆTITIA.

'Tis charitably consider'd.

JACK.

Nay, I don't know but I shou'd be inclined to take her for better for worse, if it was not for one circumstance in her disfavour.

LÆTITIA.

May I ask what that may be?

JACK.

She has a devilish itch for painting: I shou'd expect to have all my gods and goddesses taken down to make room for her vulgar friends and relations.

Mrs. STAPLETON.

Ay, that wou'd be a sorrowful exchange to my knowledge.

LÆTITIA.

Yes, have a care of that same painting girl. My life upon it she will slip through your hands.

JACK.

Why I have my eye upon that honest gentleman in the picture, with the stag's-horns, I must own—Who shall I tell her gave me the caution?

LÆTITIA.

No matter; when you see Miss Fairfax you'll remember me.

JACK.

JACK.
Fairfax! the vengeance: How came you to guess her name?

LÆTITIA.
Oh, Sir, there is but one painter in the street, and she, I believe, will remain there; your collection is safe; she will trouble you with none of her performances, none of her daubings, take my word. Your most obedient—Let us make haste home, and be ready to receive him: Vain, senseless coxcomb! how I shall enjoy his confusion! *[Exit with Mrs. Staple.]*

JACK.
A good lively wench, but the devil of a tongue! I'll run and hand her to her coach. *[Exit.]*

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Enter DIBBLE and LUCY.

LUCY.
STILL I protest against your project; we shall reap nothing from it, take my word, but shame and disappointment; however, to convince you that my fears are not for myself, I am prepared and shall go through with it, as you desire.

DIBBLE.
My life upon't, he takes the bait this time.

LUCY.
I doubt it, but no matter: Sore it's time that he was come. Hark! who is that? look out.

DIBBLE.
'Sdeath! Mrs. Stapleton and Miss Lætitia.

LUCY.
What's to be done now?

DIBBLE.
We've nothing for it, but a desperate rally; slip the back-way down with me, and let us both go out and

THE CHOLERIC MAN.

and stop young Nightshade : We can take him to my lodgings and prevent an interview that must be fatal.

LUCY.

It is too late to deliberate : Come on. [Exeunt.

Enter Mrs. STAPLETON and LÆTITIA.

Mrs. STAPLETON.

Come, my dear Lætitia, you think of this affair too seriously : You cannot much regret a man you never saw before.

LÆTITIA.

It's true, and yet, with shame I own it to you, I am mortified severely. Was there ever such a disappointment ?

Mrs. STAPLETON.

Either he treated us with inexcusable contempt, or is profoundly ignorant. Did you remark the ridiculous observations he made on some of the pictures ?

LÆTITIA.

Yes ; but I set that down for mistaken wit ; in short, his manners are of the vulgarest cast. Are these the fruits of public education ? Is this the finish'd gentleman ? the scholar ? traveller ?—His boorish brother in the country cannot outgo this : And the world to be so blinded ! Oftentimes it speaks worse of a man than he deserves ; it is seldom guilty of selling so many untruths in his favour.

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT.

A gentleman desires to speak with Miss Fairfax.

LÆTITIA.

'Tis he—Conduct him into the drawing-room ; I'll wait on him immediately. [Exit Ser.

Mrs. STAPLETON.

Well, Lætitia, I need not recommend to you to treat him as he deserves.

LÆTITIA.

I must be more, or less, than a woman, if I spar'd him. [Exeunt.]

SCENE

SCENE II.

SERVANT *introducing* JACK NIGHTSHADE.

SERVANT.

Please to walk in here, Sir; Miss Fairfax will wait on you immediately. *[Exit]*

JACK.

Ay, ay; I dare say she will: Egad; there's no time to be lost—Drown it, where's Dibble? I expected he wou'd meet me at the gate: If I shou'd stumble on old Crusty—I don't like the looks of the land so well as I did: Here's such a solitude, and such a ceremony—Why the plague do they make me kick my heels here? What, the vengeance! is she come again?

Enter LÆTITIA.

LÆTITIA.

Your humble servant, Mr. Manlove: You scarce expected, I believe, to meet your visiter again so soon.

JACK.

No, indeed: it is vastly beyond my hopes.

LÆTITIA.

You are punctual to your assignation, I perceive.

JACK.

Oh yes; Ma'am: to be sure, Ma'am—How the plague shall I get rid of her?

LÆTITIA.

You did well to consider the poor fond girl that is dying for you.

JACK.

She has the devil of an assurance—What are these London Ladies made of?

LÆTITIA.

He is thoroughly confounded: I'll give him a chance; however.—Have you any commands for me, Sir?

JACK.

Commands! Oh, none in life, I thank you; no commands. What won't that serve? No: She will

have her talk out at least. I hope you lik'd the pictures? Sure Miss Fairfax will come presently.

LÆTITIA.

I admire your collection greatly; my expectations in that particular were not disappointed.

JACK.

I understand your insinuation, Madam; but Ladies expectations, I am told, are not always to be satisfied.

LÆTITIA.

In Mr. Manlove's instance, perhaps not easily.

JACK.

Really, Madam, I shou'd wish to do justice to a lady's good opinion: but your visit, I must say, was rather unseasonable, and that elderly Lady was so vexatiously in the way.

LÆTITIA.

I am sorry for it, Sir: I am afraid our visit was rather out of rule.

JACK.

That's honest now; and since you own it, I must fairly say, the present is none of the most welcome.

LÆTITIA.

I readily believe it—and therefore, Sir, though it is not altogether in character for me to promote a conversation of such a sort as you hinted at when we met at your own house; yet, I must observe to you, if you have any such proposal in design, it will be for both our ease that you shou'd come to the point directly.

JACK.

To the point, Madam! Upon my soul I don't know what to say to that—To be sure I did come here with a full and fixt design of offering myself to Miss Fairfax upon the marrying lay, and that, you know, at best is but a hanging kind of job; so that if I appear rather dull of apprehension, I hope you will recollect that a man cannot be very merry when he's on his road to his execution.

LÆTITIA.

Oh, Sir, be under no concern on that account; assure yourself, I have to the full as little disposition towards that state as you can have.

JACK.

JACK.
Well said again! but it won't take.—You are in the right; you are for enjoying your freedom.

LÆTITIA.

Since we are both agreed in that respect, what occasion is there for more words? I believe we may break up the conference.

JACK.

As soon as ever you please; I am by no means for delaying you.

LÆTITIA.

I wait your motions, Mr. Manlove, I'm here at home.

JACK.

You cannot be more so than I am.

LÆTITIA.

Indeed! this conduct, Mr. Manlove, is so opposite to all that I expected from you, that I'm cast into astonishment. Upon what reasons, or from what caprice you've chose to take it up I know not; natural it cannot be to any man. However, Sir, I'll take you at your word, and, for a moment, will suppose you more welcome in this house than you really are, and leave you in possession of it. [Exit.]

JACK.

Come, come, well off! I've bolted her at last. 'Fore George, I begin to be tired of my plumes: Every man's best in his own coat and his own character: Plain Jack and the country, wou'd have suited me better: There are so many demands upon a fine gentleman, that nobody but a fine gentleman can tell how to avoid them.

Enter GREGORY.

GREGORY.

Ah, Master Jacky, keep close. Yonder's your old Dadd at the street door in a notable primmunity.

JACK.

Death and the devil! how shall I break pasture without his seeing me?

GREGORY.

Never fear it; he has a job upon his hands will

tether him for one while. Egad, I hope they'll treat him with a ducking.

JACK.

What is the matter?

GREGORY.

Nay, nothing out of course; he has crack'd the news-man's noddle for winding his horn in his ear; he pretends to have delicate nerves, you know; and so the fellow rais'd a mob upon him, that has drove him into cover, and they are now baying the old buck at the door. Ay, yonder he is; you must keep close till he's off his stand.

JACK.

Have an eye upon the door—I hope they will scare him soundly; it may save your scull and mine many a hard pelt. But, Gregory, who is this fine Madam I've been talking to? Lawyer Dibble sure has not put me on a wrong scent: They introduc'd her to me as Miss Fairfax; are there two Miss Fairfaxes, as well as two Mr. Maploves, a false one and a true one?

GREGORY.

What shall I say now?—Oh, yes, there are two ladies of that name; but this is only a cousin of the other; a kind of hanger-on in the family.

JACK.

A hanger-on, do you say?—Keep your eye upon the door—Why, she's better dress'd, and a finer woman than her I'm in pursuit of.

GREGORY.

Ay, ay, but your's has the fortune; Dibble's Miss Fairfax is the girl for your purpose.

JACK.

But where is Dibble and his Miss Fairfax? I have danc'd attendance here a pretty while; what am I to think of all this?

GREGORY.

What are you to think of it? why I'll tell you; this young lady, d'ye see—Now don't you go about, Master Jacky, and say that I told you, but this

young

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young lady here, that you have been talking to, is—
Hark, sure your father's coming.

JACK.

I hear his foot upon the stairs; my bones ake at
the sound of it.

GREGORY.

Quick, quick, down the back stairs, and away for
your life; so, so, that's well. [Exit Jack.]

Enter NIGHTSHADE.

NIGHTSHADE.

Why, Gregory, rascal, hangdog! what's become
of you? run quickly down and drive those bawling
fellows from the gate.

GREGORY.

A herd of wolves as soon; they'll eat me up alive.
O lack-a-day, Sir, you know little of a London mob.

NIGHTSHADE.

Go down I tell you, Sirrah, and disperse 'em.

GREGORY.

Why, Sir, 'tis more than my Lord Mayor can do:
There's a man knock'd o' the head they say, and till
there's another or two to keep him company, they'll
never be at rest: Leave 'em to fight it out.

NIGHTSHADE.

Leave 'em! why blockhead, it is me they follow:
Nothing else should have driven me into this house
again.

GREGORY.

O Gemini, have you been knock'd o' the head?

NIGHTSHADE.

Why no, you fool, 'tis I have done the mischief;
but the most patient man alive cou'd do no less.

GREGORY.

Nay, Sir, if you have been playing the same tune
upon their noddles, as you do upon mine, these
London sculls won't bear it; they are as brittle as a
Shrewsbury cake.

Enter STAPLETON.

STAPLETON.

Hey-day, friend Andrew, what is all this noise and outcry?

NIGHTSHADE.

I think the devil's in the people, you shall hear—
As I was coming down the street, in meditation on the parson's pidgeon-house, a rascally scaramouch, in a short jerkin, with a cap and feather on his noddle, winds me a damn'd blast on his post horn, point-blank into my ear, flourishing his newspapers full in my face at the same time: Now as there are no two things I hate on earth like newspapers and noises, so I could not well avoid giving him a gentle remembrance with my cane upon his crown: The casket gave a curfed crack and down tumbled the politician: Instantly the raggamuffins collected, and I took refuge here in your court-yard.

STAPLETON.

Nay, if you have silenc'd the Morning Post, you had better have drag'd the speaker out of his coach, and beat his brains out with the mace. Do you consider how many enemies you make by stopping the circulation of abuse? 'tis as necessary to the city as the circulation of cash.

NIGHTSHADE.

Go down I tell you, fellow, and make up the matter with a dram; 'tis as much as any newspaper-head is worth in the kingdom; bid him not talk of damages; if my cane has split his scull, 'tis no more than his plaguy post-horn did by mine: He was the aggressor.

STAPLETON.

Hark'ee, you'll find the matter settled, but it will not be amiss to frighten him a little; you know how to manage it.

(aside to Greg.)

GREGORY.

Most daintily I warrant you.

[Exit.]

Enter

Enter Mrs. STAPLETON and LÆTITIA.

LÆTITIA.

O, Mr. Nightshade, here's a piece of work!—this comes of being in a passion.

Mrs. STAPLETON.

A sober citizen, a pains-taking industrious soul—

LÆTITIA.

father of a family—eight helpless babes—I fear you've given him his last blow—Dear Sir, assist us!

NIGHTSHADE.

Last blow! what matters that, when he gave me the first!

Mrs. STAPLETON.

Well, well, heaven knows, but anger is a frightful thing; it turns a man into a fury. Defend me, I say, from a passionate man.

NIGHTSHADE.

And yet, madam, give me leave to tell you, you are enough to make one: Is it nothing to have our nerves lacerated, our whole fabrick shook to atoms by these horrid noises! The law should provide against such nuisances.

STAPLETON.

The law regards breaking of heads as the greater nuisance of the two—But here comes Gregory—Well, what has become of the postman?

Enter GREGORY.

GREGORY.

He has sounded his last horn! You may sleep in quiet for the future. I tender'd him the dram your honour was so good to offer; but his teeth are closed, he can't accept your favour.

Mrs. STAPLETON.

O horrible, you've kill'd the man!

STAPLETON.

What say the standers-by on the occasion?

GREGORY.

64 THE CHOLERIC MAN.

GREGORY.

They give him an extraordinary character; they say he deliver'd a hand bill and founded a posthorn better than any man in all the bills of mortality.

LÆTITIA

Thanks to Mr. Nightshade, he is likely to make a figure in the bills of mortality still—did you see the wound?

GREGORY.

A perilous gash, I'd not have such a star in my forehead to be the richest alderman in the city of London.

NIGHTSHADE.

'Tis a pity but he had been one, for then his horns might have warded off the blow.

GREGORY.

If I was your honour I would be looking out for the crowner; it will be well done to touch him pretty handsomely before he calls a quest upon the body.

Mrs. STAPLETON.

Has the gentleman thought of any witnesses?

GREGORY.

You must have a steady set to prevent accidents, unprejudic'd, impartial men, that were not present at the affair, these people will never do: For my part, if you think of subornaying me, you are a lost man, if I was once to shew this head of mine in open court you wou'd be condemned upon the face of it.

NIGHTSHADE.

Hold your tongue, rascal, I don't believe a word you say: I'll go down and be satisfied with my own eyes.

STAPLETON.

Hold, hold, friend Andrew, I'll not suffer it; they'll tear you piecemeal: Stay where you are and let me see if I can't quiet 'em; they know me and will credit what I tell 'em: If it is as Gregory says I'll send him to the hospital; we'll save him, if it's possible.

NIGHT.

NIGHTSHADE.

Thank you, Master Stapleton, thank you heartily.
That's friendly howsoever. *[Exit Stapleton.]*

LÆTITIA. *(to Mrs. Stapleton.)*

Dear Madam, follow Mr. Stapleton, and persuade him not to let him off; he must be made to feel.

Mrs. STAPLETON.

I think he should, and will leave him in your hands. *[Exit.]*

LÆTITIA.

Ah, Mr. Nightshade, will you never be brought off from this unhappy temper? You see the dismal effects of it; you feel them; I perceive you do: Your compunction is severe; I pity you—your situation brings the tears into my eyes.

NIGHTSHADE.

It's more than it does into mine; I tell you it is all a collusion to extort money; and this rogue of mine falls in with the plot. Stapleton will tell another story.

LÆTITIA.

I am afraid not; prepare yourself for the worst, and consider what attonement you can make to a disconsolate widow.

NIGHTSHADE.

Spare your pity, young madam, you don't yet know how easy most widows are to be comforted.

GREGORY.

To be sure, madam, his honour is in the right to bear up as they say, but it will be a trapan at least: The china riviter at next door is a knowing man in fractures, and he says his scull will never ring well again so long as it is a scull. Oh, Sir, what will poor dear Master Jacky think of this? He's in the country, lord love him, and little dreams of this mishap; I fear 'twill break his heart.

NIGHTSHADE.

Hold your tongue, you blockhead. Well, Mr. Stapleton, you've seen the man.

K

Re-enter

Re-enter STAPLETON.

STAPLETON.

I've seen the man, and pacified the mob.

NIGHTSHADE.

That's well; and it all proves a false alarm?

STAPLETON.

I wish I cou'd say so—but we must hope the best.

NIGHTSHADE.

How! what! sure he is not in danger? This fellow's report I did not regard; your's alarms me.

STAPLETON.

Compose yourself, however; the symptoms, indeed, are unpromising, but I have put him into good hands; he is convey'd to the London Hospital. Be a man; I am sorry to see you so uneasy.

LÆTITIA.

Dear Sir, 'tis natural; the worst of men have moments of compunction; it is not to be supposed that Mr. Nightshade, though fatally addicted to passion, is totally devoid of human feelings.

NIGHTSHADE.

I beg you'll be so kind to leave me; I shou'd wish to have a minute's recollection. Gregory, you may stay.

(He retires to the back scene.)

STAPLETON.

Lætitia, I begin to pity him.

LÆTITIA.

Have patience: let him chew the cud of reflection. Remorse, sometimes, like an advertising quack, will make great commotion in a man's constitution; but repentance is the regular physician, which by slow but steady means, conducts the patient to his cure.

[Exeunt Stapleton and Lætitia.]

NIGHTSHADE.

Gregory!

GREGORY.

Your honour! How sanctified he looks! as who shou'd say, Gregory, give me a good word on my trial.

NIGHTSHADE.

I'm thinking, Gregory, of this accident.

GRE-

GREGORY.

Well, Sir, and how do you like it?

NIGHTSHADE.

Why, I'm in hopes it will blow over; I think they'll hardly prosecute, and if the worst shou'd happen, they can make nothing of it, but chance-medley or manslaughter; nothing else, Gregory: So there's little to fear from the law. But as I am a man, who have always enforced the law against other people, d'ye observe me, and consequently made enemies amongst the wicked; I shou'd think, honest Gregory, you might stand in my place, and I'd be sure to bring you off, and reward you into the bargain.

GREGORY.

Lord, Sir, a trifle; I shou'd be proud of being hang'd in the service of so good a master; but I'm afraid there were too many people present, and 'twou'd be gross presumption to suppose any body cou'd mistake me for your honour.

NIGHTSHADE.

Why certainly that is a hard pill to swallow; but what is to be done?

GREGORY.

Make over your estate to Master Jacky, and fly your country: What if I run to the French walk, and take you a passage in the Boulogne Pacquet? I may be in time to secure the cabin before any other malefactor has taken a birth in it.

NIGHTSHADE.

Malefactor! prythee let me hear no more of your advice, it is but wasting time; I must have better counsel; and tho' brother Manlove has not pleas'd me in the matter of the pigeon-house, yet he's a good man in the main, and understands his business; run to him, d'ye hear, and desire him to repair here directly, upon a pressing concern; I know he'll not refuse assistance when I really want him.

GREGORY.

I'll go directly—This is lucky.

(*aside.*)

NIGHTSHADE.

And d'ye mind, leave me to open the affair to him; say nothing of the accident.

GREGORY.

No to be sure; a likely matter, truly. *[Exit,*

NIGHTSHADE.

I wish I had not smote him quite so hard; and yet I shou'd have thought no mischief cou'd have follow'd; I've struck that clod-pate twice as hard, a hundred and a hundred times; 'tis that has spoilt my hand: it is surprizing what some heads will bear; I wou'd I was with my poor boy in the country; what evil genius brought me up to this curst scene of mischief and mischance? Dear fortune, rescue me from this one scrape, and let me scramble out of the next as I can. *[Exit,*

Enter LÆTITIA *followed by* CHARLES.

LÆTITIA.

Now, Sir, be pleas'd to favour me with your commands.

CHARLES.

I am to solicit you in behalf of Mr. Manlove, that he may be allow'd the honour of making himself known to you.

LÆTITIA.

That is done already: I am no stranger to Mr. Manlove, believe me.

CHARLES.

So, so: she has discovered me—Well, Madam, if Mr. Manlove is already known to you in his assumed character, may he not hope to improve that acquaintance in his real one?

LÆTITIA.

The character he has assumed, I must fairly own to you, gives me no favourable opinion of his real one: The shallow devices he made use of to impose on my understanding, when he thought himself secure from a discovery, betray a disingenuous mind; and I must believe, that no man wou'd descend from the character of a gentleman, who was not wanting in the requisites that go to the support of it.

CHARLES.

CHARLES.

I've made myself a precious blockhead: This mummery of the painter has disgusted her. (*aside.*)

LÆTITIA.

As to his pretended taste for painting, I will not affect more skill than I possess, but I will venture to say, that either he is ignorant of the art, or presumes upon my being so.

CHARLES.

I'm fairly trapp'd: I must be prating of what I did not understand—I will not offer much in Mr. Manlove's behalf, Madam; but as to his skill in painting, you will be pleas'd to consider him not as a professor, but a lover only of the art.

LÆTITIA.

A lover, Sir! that is the last character I shou'd wish to consider Mr. Manlove in.

CHARLES.

I perfectly understand you, Miss Fairfax: You have said enough: Mr. Manlove understands you: I believe I need not explain myself any farther.

LÆTITIA.

No, the case is perfectly clear; and I flatter myself you think I have been explicit on my part.

CHARLES.

There can be no complaint on that score. Nothing now remains for Mr. Manlove, but to lay aside, as soon as he is able, every thought, each hope that had Miss Fairfax for its object.

LÆTITIA.

It will be much for my repose

CHARLES.

Rely upon it, then, your repose shall never be disturb'd by Mr. Manlove; never—Adieu. (*goes out.*)

LÆTITIA.

Your servant—He's piqued, and it becomes him.

CHARLES. (*returns.*)

If ever you see him here again, say I have deceiv'd you—let me bear the blame: Your most obedient.

LÆTITIA.

Good day—I shall depend upon you.

CHARLES.

THE CHOLERIC MAN.

CHARLES.

Set your mind at rest; I'll die before I break my word: Your servant. [Exit.

LÆTITIA. (*alone.*)

How wou'd this man plead in his own cause! Ah, why wou'd fortune not concert with nature, and either give the wealth of Manlove to his merits; or purchase out his merits to bestow on Manlove's wealth?

Enter LUCY *hastily.*

LUCY.

Where can this provoking cloak be laid? Every thing is in train, and there is not a moment to be lost—Ah! (*screams.*)

LÆTITIA.

Lucy! whither away so fast?

LUCY.

I declare I did not see you, Madam; I thought you was in your own room.

LÆTITIA.

But where are you running to, Child?

LUCY.

Only stepping out a little way.

LÆTITIA.

Stepping out! whither?

LUCY.

To my brother Dibble's.

LÆTITIA.

For what?

LUCY.

Upon a little family business, that's all. I cou'd have sworn you had been with your gentleman in the painting-room.

LÆTITIA.

My gentleman! who is it you call my gentleman?

LUCY.

Humph—I'll show her that I am in her secrets; it will keep her out of mine. (*aside.*) I thought you was with Mr. Manlove; I left you together.

LÆTITIA.

Mr. Manlove! what is this you tell me?

LUCY.

LUCY

Nay, Madam, don't be alarm'd, I am no tell-tale; and though I knew Mr. Manlove in his painter's character, nobody shall be the wiser for me, I assure you.

LÆTITIA.

As sure as can be it is so! what a discovery! (*aside.*) Well, Lucy, I find you are in the secret; you know the real Mr. Manlove; but pray tell me who is the pretended one? I have been received at Mr. Manlove's house, and visited here, by a young man who calls himself Manlove: Who is he?

LUCY.

Oh, dear Ma'am. don't you know him?—I wish I don't get into a scrape, but there is no going back—(*aside.*) It is young Mr. Nightshade out of the country, Ma'am; he is come up incog, and is afraid his father shou'd discover him, that's all.

LÆTITIA.

Is that all? I shan't take your word for that. I suspect there is more in the plot than you have related. If this young man is afraid of being seen by his father, what brings him hither? Answer me that?

LUCY.

Madam, I—I—I can't tell what brings him hither.

LÆTITIA.

Lucy, don't equivocate; for I will know. I saw him leave the house just now with your brother, you are following in great haste; upon family business you pretend; but I suspect upon no fair errand: Confess to me, for you shall not stir to your brother's 'till you do.

LUCY.

As you will for that, Madam, but I cannot endure to be suspected, and I will confess to you when I have done crying.

LÆTITIA.

Do so, you had best.

LUCY.

Why then you must know, that Mr. Manlove, that is, I mean Mr. Nightshade, that calls himself Mr. Manlove, is fallen monstrously in love with—

LÆTITIA.

With whom?

LUCY.

LUCY.

Me, Madam.—Vain creature! I know she thought it was herself. *(aside.)*

LÆTITIA.

And you believ'd him, did you?

LUCY.

Yes, Madam, I believ'd him.

LÆTITIA.

Well, and what did he do then?

LUCY.

Nay nothing, Madam, that's all.

LÆTITIA.

Come, come, Lucy, but I know it is not all: You have given him your company, as you call it, have you not? and you are now going to meet him at your brother's, are you not?

LUCY.

No—yes—but if I am, it's all in fair and honest way of courtship: Oh, if he was to go for to offer any thing unhandsome to me, I should tear his eyes out. Nobody can say I have the least speck or flaw, no not so big as the point of a pin, on my reputation. It would be the death of me—I would sooner part from my life than my virtue; he has promis'd—

LÆTITIA.

What has he promis'd?

LUCY.

To marry me.

LÆTITIA.

Marry you! ridiculous.

LUCY.

Ay, I knew the jealous thing could not bear that; she will burst with envy. *(aside.)*

LÆTITIA.

Hark'ee, Lucy; I commend you for the honesty of your confession, run into my chamber; Mr. Stapleton is coming this way, and will interrupt us: Compose yourself, and we will talk over the affair at leisure. *(Exit Lucy.)* Happy, happy revolution! What a ridiculous mal-entendu had I fallen into! Oh how deliciously I will torture this fine gentleman-painter for his contrivances!

ACT.

ACT V. SCENE I.

Enter JACK and DIBBLE.

DIBBLE.

COME along, Squire, the lady is expecting you at my apartment. Every thing is in train, and 'twill be your own fault now if you are not the happiest man in England.

JACK.

Hold a moment, Dibble, hold! My brother's coming and I can't resist the pleasure of a little natural exultation.

DIBBLE.

Perverse, vexation! Are you mad? By heavens you'll lose the lady—and what is worse, by heavens she'll lose the gentleman! *(aside.)*

Enter CHARLES.

CHARLES.

So, Jack, I hope your frolick's at an end: you've been disorderly in your cups I find.

JACK.

Where did you hear that?

CHARLES.

Where I least wish'd to hear it; at Mr. Stapleton's; Miss Fairfax told me.

JACK.

Miss Fairfax told you, did she so? Miss Fairfax was not very angry when she told you, I shou'd guess: You did not find me greatly out of favour, did you?

CHARLES.

In truth I had so little occasion to boast of my own reception, Jack, that I did not give much attention to what she said of you.

L

JACK.

JACK.

That's honestly confessed however : So your reception was but cold, and you have drop'd all thoughts of a connexion I suppose ?

CHARLES.

Intirely : I've received my peremptory dismissal.

JACK.

Poor Charles ! you are dismiss'd ? Your person, genius, equipage, estate, all stand you in no stead ? Another is prefer'd before you—perhaps some country booby like myself, and don't you wish you knew the happy man ?

CHARLES.

Not I.

DIBBLE.

What are you at ? you'll ruin all.

JACK.

I shall burst if I don't tell him—Brother, I believe I cou'd direct you to the man that's done all the mischief.

CHARLES.

I give you credit, Jack, for that : I do believe you've done me all the mischief in your power.

JACK.

Who, I ? Oh dear, you flatter me ; a country whelp supplant a travell'd gentleman like you ? impossible—and yet—

CHARLES.

What yet ?

JACK.

This witness on my finger here would stagger some folks ; I am apt to think Miss Fairfax means to wear it in good time.

CHARLES.

A wedding ring ! you must excuse me, Jack ; I want credulity for that.

JACK.

Just as you please ; I bought it for her wearing, and measur'd her finger for that purpose, and did intend with the parson's help to put it on with that design.

DIBBLE.

DIBBLE.

Will nothing stop your mouth? By heavens I'll throw the matter up.

(aside to Jack.)

CHARLES.

You! you marry Miss Lætitia Fairfax!

DIBBLE.

Dear 'Squire be persuaded, and come away.

(aside to Jack.)

JACK.

Hold your tongue I tell you—I, I, and not the ingenious, learned, travell'd Mr. Manlove; here's a witness that will vouch for what I say. *(Dibble offers to go.)* Where are you running?—come back. Tell my brother what you know of Miss Fairfax's partiality for a certain, insignificant, ignorant fellow, call'd Jack Nightshade.

DIBBLE.

For shame, Sir, you should not talk of lady's favours.

CHARLES.

Your friend is cautious you perceive.

JACK.

Hang him, he's so by habit; he's a lawyer—but speak out: You are come to fetch me to Miss Fairfax, and Miss Fairfax is at your lodgings, and I am to be the lady's husband, and the bill is a true bill, is it not?

DIBBLE.

It is.

CHARLES.

Errors excepted—You forgot your caution. This can never be. Hark'ee, Sir; a little cross examination if you please.

JACK.

As much of that as you think proper. He's us'd to that sport; he'll dodge like a rabbit in a warren.

CHARLES.

You say the lady is at your lodgings; Answer me, what lady?

DIBBLE.

Sir, I believe—what lady?—that's your question—
what lady is at my lodgings?

CHARLES.

Ay, Sir, without equivocation,

DIBBLE.

Well, Sir, I am not upon oath in this business;
nor am I obliged to ascertain the identity of people's
persons; but the lady at my lodgings I take to be
Miss Fairfax.

JACK.

Does that satisfy you? Brother, I thank you for
your coat; it has made an impression you perceive.

CHARLES.

Have a little patience—You take her to be Miss
Fairfax?—describe her person.

DIBBLE.

I never meddled with her person, Sir; that's not
for me to do.

CHARLES.

Is she fair complexion'd?

DIBBLE.

I think so.

JACK.

I can't say I do.

CHARLES.

Light hair, or dark?

DIBBLE.

My eyes are none of the best, but I think Miss
Fairfax's hair is white.

JACK.

Black as a crow, by Jupiter.

CHARLES.

Tall, or short?

DIBBLE.

I never measur'd her but, I take her to be tall.

JACK.

Death and the devil, why you're drunk! Fair, tall,
light-hair'd! why she's a little, dapper, dusky damsel,
with a poll as black as—

CHARLES.

Hark'ee, Sir, a word in your ear: (to Dibble.

DIBBLE.

DIBBLE.

Blown, as I hope to be a judge! *(aside)*

CHARLES.

You have a sister answers this description: You're discover'd and a villain. *(aside to Dibble)*

JACK.

Hold, hold, no closeting of witnesses.

DIBBLE.

Good Sir, be not offended. Mr. Nightshade first borrow'd your name, and my sister to keep up the jest, made free with that of Miss Fairfax—nothing but a frolick.

CHARLES.

What do you tell me? did my brother take my name in any interview with Miss Fairfax?

DIBBLE.

Certainly, Sir; she calls him Mr. Manlove at this moment.

CHARLES.

Away; your news has saved your ears, away.

DIBBLE.

'Egad we are all blown up: I must go and tell Lucy to make her peace. *[Exit.]*

JACK.

How now; what's this? Hollo! where's Dibble running?

CHARLES.

Your humble Servant, Mr. Manlove—Take my name, my credit from me, Jack? It is too much. You must be saved however.

JACK.

I must be satisfied. Is this fair dealing? Where is Dibble gone?

CHARLES.

Let him go where he will; he has made a fool of you.

JACK.

Yes, but I'm not a fool to take your word for that; so let me pass.

CHARLES.

Nay, Jack, but hear reason—

JACK

THE CHOLERIC MAN.

JACK.

Yes, and while you are reasoning, I shall lose the lady.

CHARLES.

I say the lady; have a care she does not prove the lady's maid,

JACK.

The maid! ah, brother, I'm too cunning to take that upon trust. You have raised my curiosity however, and I will know the truth----So let me go; for go I will, and that's enough. *[Exit.]*

CHARLES.

A match, we'll start together. My happiness is sure as much concern'd in this discovery, as your's.
(follows him.)

SCENE II. Stapleton's House.

Enter NIGHTSHADE and MAN LOVE.

NIGHTSHADE.

I should think, brother, there's no danger but a jury will see the action in this light.

MAN LOVE.

'Tis hard to say; juries are ticklish things; the law will look to the motives: *If it shall appear that it was done not from the wickedness of the heart, but from the sudden heat of the passions, a jury will bring it in Manslaughter.*

NIGHTSHADE.

Well, and don't all the world know there's not a more passionate man living than myself?

MAN LOVE.

You have sometimes told me I was passionate; I never heard you say as much for yourself.

NIGHTSHADE.

But if there was no malice in the deed, how can it ever be deem'd murder?

MAN LOVE.

Malice is threefold: First, malice express; secondly, malice implied; thirdly, malice prepense: Of each in their order——

NIGHT.

NIGHTSHADE.

Pshaw! pr'ythee, what avails describing any, when I've none of all the three?

MAN LOVE.

Had you no quarrel then before the act?

NIGHTSHADE.

Quarrel! why no---or if I had, 'twas only a few words.

MAN LOVE.

Is that the cane you struck him with?

NIGHTSHADE.

This is the twig; I call it nothing more.

MAN LOVE.

I doubt the law will construe it a weapon of offence.

NIGHTSHADE.

And pray now was not his a weapon of offence? I believe the whole town thinks it such, of great offence; sick or well, there's no repose for those horns. What I did was in self-defence.

MAN LOVE.

I fear 'twill not be thought so: If indeed you had any wound to shew whereby the violence of the battery might be proved---

NIGHTSHADE.

Wound! why I have a wound as bad an one as his; only mine lies within side of my head, and his without: He has broke the drum of my ears.

MAN LOVE.

What do you talk of ears? if you had been happy enough now to have lost a finger, an eye, or a foretooth, it would have been the loss of a defensive member, and a mayhem at common law.

NIGHTSHADE.

Well, brother, be so kind to tell me what I am to do.

MAN LOVE.

Repent.

NIGHT-

NIGHTSHADE.

Why so I will, provided you say nothing about the matter, and my country acquits me upon trial; but if I am to be punished for my faults, what signifies repenting of 'em into the bargain?

MAN LOVE.

Well, Andrew, I must tell you there is yet a way of getting honourably out of this affair, provided you will bind yourself to me, never to lift your hand in wrath against a fellow creature.

NIGHTSHADE.

Why no, to be sure I shan't; I thought all sculls were as hard as Gregory's.

MAN LOVE.

Come, you must have done with Gregory's; nay, I wou'd not alone exempt man from your fury, but beast likewise: Cruelty must not be practised in any shape: Nature must not be wounded in any of her works. Promise me this upon the faith of an honest man, and I'll redeem you from this scrape.

NIGHTSHADE.

Look'ee, Brother, I am sensible of the folly of it, but as it's impossible to say where temptation may lead, there lies the fatal weapon; use it who will; I'll never take another stick in hand, till I'm obliged to go upon crutches. *(throws down his cane.)*

MAN LOVE.

Say you so, then I'll cure your broken head in an instant. Come with me, and you shall see what dispatch I can make upon occasion. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE III. *The Painting Room.*

LÆTITIA is discover'd painting; LUCY attending; a layman placed at some distance.

LÆTITIA.

These touches come off well; this last sitting was a good one: Methinks I never was in better look. Lucy, what say you? is it like?

LUCY.

THE CHOLERIC MAN.

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LUCY.

Like, Madam! 'tis alive; 'tis Mr. Stapleton himself.

LETITIA.

Is the servant gone for his cloaths to dress the layman? I'll positively rub in the drapery now I'm about it. Well, child, I've turn'd this matter in my head, and I believe I must forgive you; there's no holding out against contrition; I believe your brother was to blame—so this painter then is Mr. Manlove?

LUCY.

Yes, madam, and a lovely man he is; if you please to remember, I told you so the first moment I saw him; so genteel, so well-bred, so perfectly the gentleman. Oh, here comes Thomas with the cloaths—shall I help to put 'em on?

Enter SERVANT.

LETITIA.

So, so! that's right—let the arm fall naturally—it's very well as it is—Now turn the layman with its side to me—no, no other way—a little more. Stay, let me do it myself. Now stand away—that's it.

SERVANT.

Have you any further commands, madam?

LETITIA.

No; yes. If the young gentleman who was with me this morning should call again, shew him up hither.

SERVANT.

The painter?

LETITIA.

Yes, the painter, as you call him.

SERVANT.

Madam, he is this moment come into the courtyard.

LETITIA.

Indeed! then do as I bid you. (Exit Ser.) So, so, he has found out the mistake as well as myself.

M

LUCY.

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LUCY.

Pray, Madam, give me leave to go and shew Mr. Manlove hither.

LÆTITIA.

Do so, Lucy, do so—What a flutter am I in!—but, hark'ee, don't give him any intimation that I know him. (*Exit Lucy.*) This is happy! I am such a gainer by this revolution that I cannot find in my heart to be angry with the girl—That ever I shou'd be the bubble of so gross an imposition! Hark; he's coming. I'll pretend to be at work! tho' I am so confused I don't know one colour from another. O heavens, how charmingly he looks! (*she rises.*)

Enter CHARLES.

CHARLES.

I ask a thousand pardons; I entreat I mayn't disturb you.

LÆTITIA.

Oh, Sir, don't mention it: You see I use no ceremony,

CHARLES,

You're infinitely obliging. I have ventur'd once again, Miss Fairfax, to intrude upon your patience.

LÆTITIA.

As often as you please; you're always welcome here. Come hither—I must have your judgement, How do you like what I have done?

CHARLES,

All that you do is well; but you'll forgive me, I am full of other thoughts, and wish to lose no moment of this happy opportunity.

LÆTITIA.

Pish! I must have you flatter me: Sit down—This drappery puzzles me—Sit down, I say: Your modern habits are so stiff! How shall I manage it? Come, take the chalk; nay, no excuse! Though you are so smartly dress'd, you absolutely must assist me,

CHARLES.

I beg to be excus'd: my happiness is staked upon this crisis; my heart is full and must have vent.

LÆTITIA;

THE CHOLERIC MAN.

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LÆTITIA.

How can you be so tiresome? Now you are going upon the old topick, Mr. Manlove.

CHARLES.

I must confess it is of him that I wou'd speak.

LÆTITIA.

Fye, fye upon you! call to mind your promise: Hold—suppose I throw aside this ugly brown and gold, and put him in a fancy dress; What say you?

CHARLES.

Nothing; for I am nothing: I have no art, no faculty of painting; I am an impostor. On my knees I do beseech you, forgive and hear me.

LÆTITIA.

Pray be composed, nor let your zeal for Mr. Manlove agitate you thus. I'll save you all this trouble, by confessing freely to you, I have chang'd my mind since last we parted.

CHARLES.

Chang'd! as how?

LÆTITIA.

As you'll be pleas'd to hear. I think of Mr. Manlove now as favourably as you yourself cou'd wish.

CHARLES.

Madam——

LÆTITIA.

I think the woman must be blest, whom such a man shall honour with his choice.

CHARLES.

Indeed! I may presume then you wou'd condescend to countenance his addresses.

LÆTITIA.

That's a home question; but I think it is not easy to deny him any thing.

CHARLES.

I'm thunderstruck! The boy has told me the truth, she likes him and I am undone.

LÆTITIA.

What is the matter now? You seem quite disconcerted. Is not this the very point you aim'd at? Hav'n't I confess'd all that you wish'd?

M 2

CHARLES.

THE CHOLERIC MAN.

CHARLES.

Oh, no! You torture me.

LÆTITIA.

Man, restless man! whom nothing I can do will satisfy: Offended when I refuse your friend; when I accept him, tortur'd.

CHARLES.

And tortur'd I must be: for know, most wretched as I am, it is not for a friend I plead, but for myself.

LÆTITIA.

Well, Sir, I'm free to say, I still abide by my confession: What you tell me shakes not my esteem for Mr. Manlove.

CHARLES.

Then I have lost you; for that Manlove is my younger brother, and has won you under a fictitious name: I that really own it, am discarded.

LÆTITIA.

How purblind you long-sighted wits sometimes can be! You tell me you are Mr. Manlove; have I revok'd my opinion? You say your brother took your name; have I express'd myself in favour of Mr. Nightshade?

CHARLES.

O heavens! I do begin to hope—

LÆTITIA.

You shou'd not puzzle me with such cross purposes. Will you be Mr. Manlove, and Believe what I now say of him, or give that name to your brother, and hear me repeat what I lately said of him?

CHARLES.

Oh, let me be what you approve; I ask no higher blessing.

LÆTITIA.

We are interrupted. See, your formidable rival! Oh, you have made a fine confusion—Come away.

[Exeunt.]

Enter JACK.

JACK.

Hist! hark'ee! brother Charles!—He won't turn back, and I dare not follow him, for fear I run into
old

THE CHOLERIC MAN. 83

old Crusty's jaws: I am fain to go as warily in this house as if I was riding over a warren. Didlikins! here comes the girl at last—Oh, fye upon you, Miss, oh fye—

Enter L U C Y *hastily.*

L U C Y.

Hush! hush! A truce to your reproaches—Hide yourself; your father's at my heels.

J A C K.

My father! Drown it! what shall I do now?

L U C Y.

Here, get behind this layman, stoop: stand close: I'll put the shutters to; I owe you that good turn, at least, to bring you off. Stand close!

Enter N I G H T S H A D E.

N I G H T S H A D E.

So, so! What's doing here? Darkness at mid-day! Your servant, Mr. Stapleton; I see you notwithstanding; there you are: Fine goings on at your age: Smuggling your chambermaids in corners—Call you this fair trading? Oh, if your wife saw this.

J A C K. *(from behind.)*

For pity's sake keep him off. He's coming!

L U C Y.

Where are you coming, Sir? Pray leave the room; your company disturbs him; don't you see how ill he is?

N I G H T S H A D E.

Poor gentleman! and to you shut out the light to make him better? Ay, let him lean upon you, comfort him; I dare be sworn he has need of it—Shame upon you, Master Stapleton! What you'll not speak, not you. Here comes one will make you speak, and stir too, to some tune. Here, Madam, here's your virtuous husband; here's a picture of modern conjugal fidelity.

Enter

86 THE CHOLERIC MAN.

Enter Mrs. STAPLETON.

Mrs. STAPLETON.

A picture truly, for I think you're talking to nothing else: Why don't the girl open the shutters? What do you stand there for? O, ho! (*sees Jack.*)

Enter STAPLETON and MANLOVE.

STAPLETON.

What my old friend, conferring with the layman! Break his head, Andrew, if you please; no manslaughter can lie there. (*the window is opened.*)

NIGHTSHADE.

How's this! why I protest I took it for yourself; and I was scandaliz'd to see a sober citizen in such close conference with a damsel of so great temptations.

MANLOVE.

Come, brother, you have had one warning against anger, let this be a memento to guard against suspicion.

NIGHTSHADE.

Brother, you know I can't endure advice; I see my error; that's enough.

Mrs. STAPLETON.

Yes, but you don't see all; there's more behind the scenes; your greatest error, Mr. Nightshade, is not yet found out.

NIGHTSHADE.

Why, what the vengeance have we here? Come out: Let's see your face. Son Jack! Furies and flames! My boy as I'm alive.

MANLOVE.

This is judgement upon judgement.

NIGHTSHADE.

Which of you all have conjur'd up this plot? Oh, thou unutterably vile and sorry puppy! Hound, that I have bred to tear my heart out—Jack, Jack, Jack, for you to use me thus; you whom I've made my boast, the staff of my old age—I wou'd I had a staff, I'd beat your brains out with it, blockhead, so I wou'd.

MANLOVE.

Hold, hold, no more of that; remember promises.

NIGHT-

NIGHTSHADE.

And in that jacket too; the substance of a farm laid out upon your back: Sirrah, whence came that conjuror's coat, that scoundrel's livery? Answer me.

JACK.

Father, 'tis none of mine; 'tis brother Charles's.

NIGHTSHADE.

There, Mr. Manlove! there's your pretty gentleman! a fine account; the corrupter of his brother.

STAPLETON.

Be more patient, friend Andrew.

NIGHTSHADE.

I won't be patient; I've a father's privilege to justify my passion. Hark'ee, Sir, what brought you up to town? Who seduced you hither? I suppose the fashionable scoundrel who lent you that fool's coat.

JACK.

Lord love you, father, 'twas a frolic of my own: Charles wou'd have had me travell'd home again.

MANLOVE.

Was that like a seducer?

JACK.

And so I shou'd afore now, but that I fell into a kind of a love-suit here, with the young lady of this house.

Mrs. STAPLETON.

What do you say? a love-suit!

STAPLETON.

With my ward, Miss Fairfax? impossible.

LUCY.

Ay, now comes my examination: I had best escape.

(*aside.*)

JACK.

Hold, hold; my whole defence turns upon your testimony—Stay where you are.

(*To Lucy.*)

NIGHTSHADE.

Ay, let us hear, there's something in this plea: Let us hear more of the love-suit.

JACK.

Nay, 'twas not much of a suit neither; it was very soon over; Miss was coming, Dibble got a licence, and I bought a ring,

STA-

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STAPLETON.

Why you're beside yourself, young man.

NIGHTSHADE.

Go on! the boy speaks well, and shan't be brow-beat: Hear him out.

JACK.

And so, as I was telling you, I shoud have married her out-right, if brother Charles had not thrown a spoke in my wheel.

NIGHTSHADE.

See there, see there! What say you for your favorite now? Prove what you say, my lad, and I will do you justice to the extent of my estate.

JACK.

Say you so, father? then it shall out: Why brother Charles, you must know, had a month's mind for the lady himself; so he pretended to persuade me that I was made a fool of, and that the girl I was going to marry was not Miss Fairfax.

NIGHTSHADE.

There, there! you hear it now from the tongue of truth and innocence: You're satisfied, I hope. I beg the lady may be sent for in.

JACK.

Sent for! a pretty joke; why there she stands.

Mr. and Mrs. STAPLETON.

Ha. ha, ha!

NIGHTSHADE.

I'm thunderstruck.

JACK.

And so am I; for if it had not been for brother Charles, as sure as you are here alive, we had both been happy before now.

NIGHTSHADE.

This, this the lady?

JACK.

Ay, father, that's she: I hope you like her.

STAPLETON.

Lucy! Lucy Dibble!

MAN LOVE.

The sister of my clerk!

NIGHT.

NIGHTSHADE.

Death and the devil! a chambermaid!

MR. STAPLETON.

Ooh, you insidious hussy! what can you say for yourself?

LUCY.

I am not here upon my trial, madam; that is past, and Miss Fairfax has sign'd my pardon. As for this gentleman, if I did put a little trick upon him under my mistress's name, he paid me in my own coin, by passing himself off under his brother's. The parties represented are not present, but let me stand at Miss Fairfax's side, and place him by Mr. Manlove, and I leave the world to decide which is the greatest impostor of the two.

JACK.

Oh, you abominable little vixen!

MANLOVE.

Keep your peace, Jack, would you prove your valour on a woman?

JACK.

Then by Jupiter, I'll break every bone in lawyer Dibble's skin, before this day's at an end.

STAPLETON.

Understand yourself, child; the daughter of a footman is no mate for the son of a gentleman.

NIGHTSHADE.

To be sure: Well said, Master Stapleton!

LUCY.

True, Sir, but the footman bred his daughter as a gentleman shou'd, and the gentleman gave his son the education of a footman. [Exit.]

MANLOVE.

Brother Andrew—

NIGHTSHADE.

Pooh!

JACK.

Father, that last wipe was at you.

NIGHTSHADE.

Hold your tongue, blockhead; get you home into the country, till the soil, and be a beast of burden; 'tis what nature meant you for.

N

MAN.

MAN LOVE.

Nay, brother, blame not nature, she has done her part: 'Tis you that thou'd have till'd the soil, O Charles, you come upon a with; your father is impatient to embrace you.

Enter CHARLES.

CHARLES.

Let but my father add his approbation, and my happiness shall be complete.

MAN LOVE.

He can't withhold it. Come, throw prejudice aside; let wrath and jealousy be cast far from you: Look upon this youth; he is your son; you are the principle, but do you substitute the justice to confess my system has succeeded; it is possible you see to gain a knowledge of this world, and not be tainted with its wickedness.

NIGHTSHADE.

'Tis mighty well; but for this cub of mine I'll disinherit him to the devil; I cou'd find in my heart, to die to-morrow, for the pleasure of cutting him off with a shilling.

JACK.

Lord, father, in that case a little matter wou'd content me.

MAN LOVE.

Come, come, the law has made provision against that: Jack must inherit your estate die when you will.

NIGHTSHADE.

Then I'll not die at all; I'll live for ever on purpose to plague him; I'll starve the whelp; he shall have nothing to live upon, but rain-water and pig-nuts.

MAN LOVE.

Then, Andrew, I will keep him; he shall live with me.

NIGHTSHADE.

Say you so, brother? then I'll forgive him and keep him to myself; and since you talk of knowledge of the world, I'll shew him what it is: Come hither,

Jack,

THE CHOLERIC MAN.

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Jack: I'll go with him as far as there is water to carry us; I'll travel him to the world's end: Zounds, I'll take him out of it, rather than be out gone.

JACK.

Take the last stage by yourself, dear father. Farewel, uncle; good-bye, Charles!

[Exit Nightshade and Jack.]

MAN LOVE.

Incorrigible humourist! Come my son, and come my worthy friends: Where is your amiable ward? I still have hopes this day of rancour and confusion will conclude with joy.

STAPLETON.

And so it shall, if my persuasion can have weight.

Mrs. STAPLETON.

Persuasion never fails, when inclination aids it, Look, she comes,

CHARLES.

And comes like hope, like spring and sunshine to the longing year, with smiles of soft complacency and love.

Enter LÆTITIA.

LÆTITIA.

Ay, now your rival's gone, you think the field your own; but every hour will raise fresh rivals, for every hour will draw forth fresh perfections from a character like your's, and each demand the preference in our admiration and applause.

STAPLETON.

Well said, my girl, then there's a bargain made: What need of further words?

Mrs. STAPLETON.

Eye upon you, Mr. Stapleton, you distress her; you are too much in haste about these matters.

Mrs. STAPLETON.

Why, Dolly, you and I concluded our matter within the week.

Mrs. STAPLETON.

Longer, 'twas longer: Don't believe him, Lætitia.

LÆTITIA.

THE CHOLERIC MAN.

LÆTITIA.

Excuse me, I can readily believe that hearts so fitted for each other might unite at once by mutual attraction.

MAN LOVE.

Dost thou believe it, fair one? then away with all delay! not even the law, its own parent, shall be privileged in this case; we'll work like shipwrights at an armament, and Dibble, as a punishment for his intrigues, shall labour double tides. If marriage ever shall regain its dignity in this degenerate age, it must be by the union of such hearts as these.

STAPLETON.

And so it shall, if my inclination can have weight.

Mrs. STAPLETON.

Inclination never fails, when inclination aids it.

Look, the comes.

CHARLES.

And comes like hope, like spring and sunshine to the hanging year, with smiles of soft complacency and love.

LÆTITIA.

LÆTITIA.

Ay, how your rival's gone, you think the field your own; but every hour will raise fresh rivals, for every hour will draw forth fresh pretensions from a rival like yours, and each demand the preference in our admiration and regard.

STAPLETON.

Will you, my girl, then make a bargain made;

What need of further words?

Mrs. STAPLETON.

Eye upon you, Mr. Stapleton, you distrust her;

You are too much in haste about these matters.

Mrs. STAPLETON.

Why, Dolly, you and I concluded our matter

within the week.

Mrs. STAPLETON.

Longer, was longer; Don't believe him, Lætitia.

LÆTITIA.